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# THE GLASS OF FASHION.



THE GLASS OF FASHION.

THE  
GLASS OF FASHION:

A Unibersal Handbook of Social Etiquette and Home  
Culture for Ladies and Gentlemen.

*WITH COPIOUS AND PRACTICAL HINTS*

UPON THE

MANNERS AND CEREMONIES OF EVERY RELATION IN LIFE,  
AT HOME, IN SOCIETY, AND AT COURT.

Interspersed with Numerous Anecdotes.

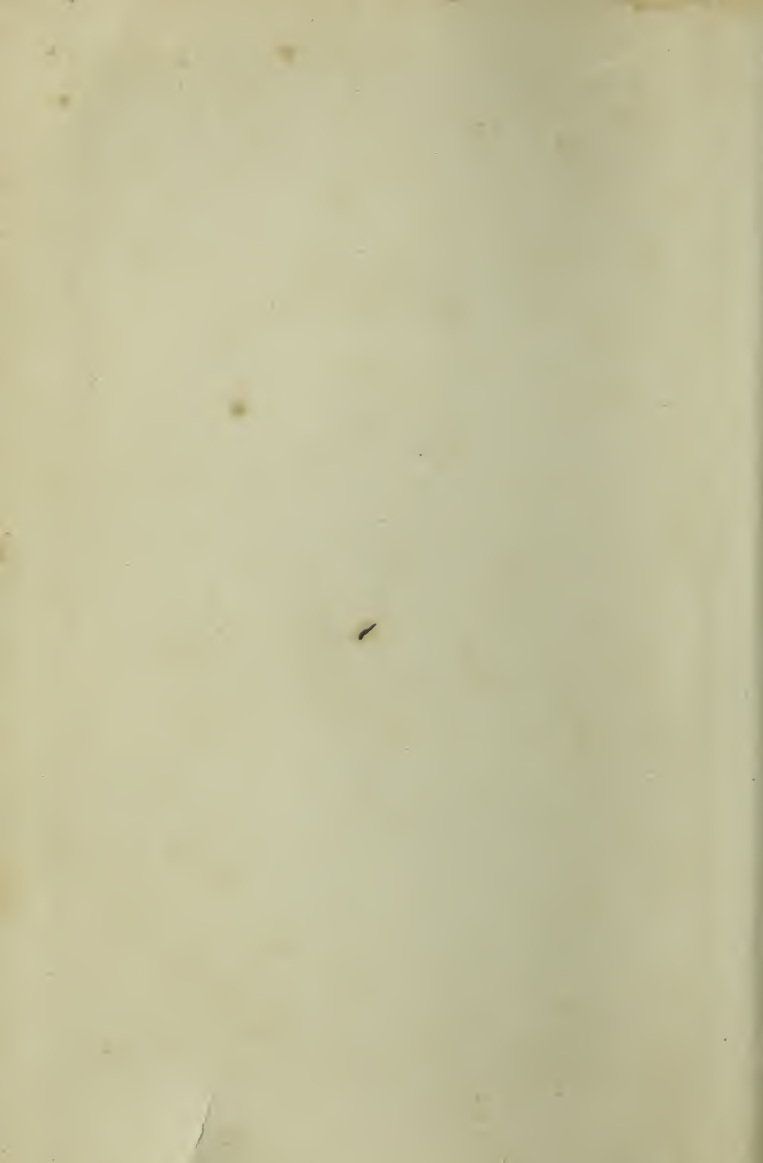
BY

THE LOUNGER IN SOCIETY.

LONDON:  
JOHN HOGG, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1881.

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## P R E F A C E.



IN the following pages an attempt has been made to treat Etiquette from a liberal point of view; understanding it to mean something more than those conventionalities of manners which are commonly called politeness—to embrace, in fact, the moral culture of the individual, and his relations to his fellows ‘at home’ and ‘abroad.’ Of this wider etiquette, or courtesy, good manners, as generally limited, form merely a part; and I take it to be a truism that a man may be favourably known for his polished bearing and graceful address, and yet be deficient in all the higher qualities which constitute the gentleman. While, therefore, the smaller details of behaviour have not been overlooked, the chief purpose of this volume is to lay down the broad, fundamental principles which should govern our intercourse with society. It begins and ends in the home-circle and in the course of its survey touches almost every situation into which the ordinary business or pleasure of life can compel us. But it everywhere insists upon the practice of generosity, forbearance, self-sacrifice, patience, as the special virtues of the gentleman, or gentlewoman. Anyone can learn to behave decorously at the dinner-table; anyone can learn how to dispose of his hat and cane when he makes a ‘morning call;’ anyone can learn to move about in a drawing-room without treading on the toes of his fellow-guests, or involving some

choice article of *vertu* in a disastrous crash : but the difficulty is to learn how to control our temper ; how to treat our equals with impartiality, and our inferiors with affability ; how to render our lives pleasant and gracious to ourselves and to others. Only him who accomplishes this, and all that it implies, will the general voice esteem a gentleman, and pronounce him :

‘ For courtesy, behaviour, language,  
And every fair demeanour an example.’

Only of her whose gifts and graces are harmonised and completed by the sweet excellence of her conduct and manner will it be said that she worthily bears the title of gentlewoman.

It is sometimes asked, For whom are manuals of etiquette intended ? And when we find their pages filled with such instructions in the minutiae of behaviour as one is wont to supply to children, we can scarcely wonder at the question. If it be put in reference to the present book, however, I would reply, For everybody who desires to obtain a general survey of the art (or science) of etiquette, and to refresh his memory with the leading principles of social culture. If I have not failed egregiously in carrying out my design, it will be found as useful by the *habitué* of the Mayfair drawing-room, as by the neophyte who, with beating heart, aspires to soar above the commonplaces of Bloomsbury. It is intended for both sexes and for all ages, as well as for all classes of society ; for the quiet middle-class family whose ambition is restricted to an ‘evening party’ once a year, not less than for the upper-class family whose members are ‘presented at court,’ and whose hours are spent in giving or attending matinées, ‘at homes,’ ‘five o’clock teas,’ ‘croquet parties,’ and the thousand and one devices by which the industriously idle endeavour to kill time. I believe that its comprehensiveness will be generally admitted, and, therefore, am not without hope that it will be accepted as a guide, a companion, and a censor in all the various scenes



which make up the drama—so dull in some of its phases, so vivid and stirring in others—of social life.

It has been sought to give a character of freshness to some of the following chapters by copious illustrations drawn from literary sources—from poetry and fiction ; nor have I scrupled to point the moral and enforce the caution by the application of anecdote, jest, and parody. A book is nothing if not readable, and readable I have tried to make *this* book. It is useless for a man to preach if he preach his congregation asleep ; and an author, if the public graciously incline to read his pages, may surely be expected to provide them with amusement.

There are some critics who seem to consider that a book upon manners is fair game for their cumbrous raillery. As they contrive to dispense with manners themselves, they fancy that they cannot be in general request. No doubt we are all of us prone to undervalue what is not an acquisition or possession of our own, but it will be well for the reader to set against their stereotyped satire the weighty judgment of Edmund Burke, which I have further insisted on in the course of the following pages : ‘ Manners,’ he says, ‘ are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, now and then,’ whereas ‘ manners give their whole form and colour to our lives.’ Hence we are all of us interested in their cultivation : they affect us wherever we are, whatever we do ; we cannot escape from their influence, for it permeates our domestic as well as our social relations. May it not be urged, then, that the writer who essays, however humbly, to formulate and recommend a code of manners deserves well of the commonwealth ? To such, an admiring and grateful country ought surely to award ‘ the civic crown !’

THE LOUNGER IN SOCIETY.





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SHAKESPEARE.

' . . . . . 'Tis ever common,  
That men are merriest when they are from home.'

*Ibid.*

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‘Now good digestion wait on appetite,  
And health on both.’

SHAKESPEARE.

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'Youth and Pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.'

BYRON.

'The music, and the banquet, and the wine—  
The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers—  
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments—  
The white arms and the raven hair—the braids  
And bracelets; swan-like bosoms, and the necklace,  
An India in itself, yet dazzling not  
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,  
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The many-tinkling feet so small and sylph-like. . . .  
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Its false and true enchantments . . . Art and Nature.'

*Ibid.*

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*Ibid.*

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A happy life with a fair death.’  
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'He will command his children and his household.'

'She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.'

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# THE GLASS OF FASHION.

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### AT HOME.

'A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest.'

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

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I PROPOSE to write a book upon social etiquette. I do not know whether on this subject I shall be able to say much that is startlingly new, for the main principles of courtesy are only slightly variable; but it will be my aim to lay down only what is true and permanent in principle, and to show its present application in such details and instances as are accepted and observed in good society, in whatever sphere of life the same may be found. Practices and observances change within the limits of principles, which either do not alter at all, or alter very little; it is the accidental expression of the latter which is subject more or less to novelties and reproductions. Especially is this the case in the fashions and adaptations to which the art and practice of dress are liable; and it naturally follows that what I have to say about dress will be at once the most novel and the most transitory.

I have observed that in most books upon etiquette, the writers begin and end abroad, instead of beginning at home; as if, somehow or other, the sphere of home was not included within the sphere of etiquette, and those wonderful laws of behaviour, those codes of manners which they love to formulate, applied only to our sayings and doings at our neighbour's, and had no value or applicability *chez nous*. Now, it is my intention to start at home, because I believe that the happiness of home may be largely promoted by a nice attention to manners. And here let me premise that etiquette, with me, will take a wide range, and embrace much more than those particularities as to the

way in which we disport ourselves at table or in the ball-room, in the salon or at the levée, to which it is usually confined. I take it to mean our rule of conduct in all the minor morals of life. What Burke says of manners conveys nearly my idea of social etiquette :—‘Manners are of more importance than laws. Upon these, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law teaches us but here and there, now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarise or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and colour to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply laws, or they totally destroy them.’ And such being my estimate of etiquette or manners, it follows that my notion of what constitutes the ‘lady’ or the ‘gentleman’ is not exactly the common one. I have met with ladies and gentlemen in a very low rank of life indeed ; well-mannered men and women, with a true instinct of refinement, with an exquisite power of sensibility and sympathy, and a vivid appreciation of the becoming—well-mannered men and women who owed their ‘sweetness and light’ to purity of heart and amiableness of temper, their grace of motion and propriety of demeanour to a natural faculty. I have met with persons leading successfully a ‘gentle life’ under conditions apparently the most unfavourable. It will be as well for us to begin, then, with a definition of ‘lady’ and ‘gentleman’ from the point of view that will be taken in this book.

To formulate that definition in negatives would be easy. As, for instance, we may say that a true gentleman does not soil his conscience with falsehoods, does not waste his time upon sensual indulgence, does not endeavour to make the worse appear the better reason, does not ridicule sacred subjects, does not wilfully give cause of offence to any, does not seek to overreach his neighbour, does not forget the respect due to womanhood or old age, the feeble or the poor. And so, too, the true lady does not condescend to scandal or gossip, does not profane her lips with ‘slang’ words, does not yield to outbursts of temper, does not sacrifice modesty to fashion, does not turn a deaf ear to the voice of distress. But to speak affirmatively : a gentleman is one whose aims are generous, whose trust is constant, whose word is never broken, whose honour is never stained, who is as brave as gentle, and as

honest as wise, who wrongs no one by word or deed, and devotes and embellishes life by nobility of thought, depth of feeling, and grace of manner: Shakespeare's Ferdinand, with the air of Mercutio, the manliness of Edgar, the passion of Romeo, and the constancy of Orlando. Says the elder Lord Shaftesbury:—'The taste of beauty, and the relish of what is decent, just, and amiable, perfects the character of the gentleman.' And of such an one we may say with John Ford:—

'I read no difference between this huge,  
This monstrous big word, *lord*, and *gentleman*,  
More than their title sounds. For aught I know  
The latter is as noble as the first.  
I'm sure more ancient.'

Thackeray has drawn a very admirable gentleman, except that his simplicity is excessive, in his Colonel Newcome;\* Lord Lytton, in his Sir Sedley Beaudesert, though he has his moral defects.† I prefer, however, Pisistratus Caxton himself,‡

\* "“By George, Tom Newcome,” said Baines, “you’re just one of the saints of the earth. If all men were like you there’d be an end of both our trades; there would be no fighting, and no soldiering, no rogues, and no magistrates to watch them.” . . . That kindness which lights up the Colonel’s eyes, gives an expression to the very wrinkles round about them, shines as a halo round his face, what artist can paint it?”—*The Newcomes*.

† ‘If Sir Sedley Beaudesert had but been an egotist, he had been the happiest of men. But, unfortunately for him, he was singularly amiable and kind-hearted. He had the *bonne digestion*, but not the other requisite for worldly felicity—the *mauvais cœur* . . . Indolent as he was, he had contrived to open an extraordinary number of drains on his wealth. First, as a landed proprietor, there was no end to applications from distressed farmers, aged poor, benefit societies, and poachers he had thrown out of employment by giving up his preserves to please his tenants. Next, as a man of pleasure, the whole race of womankind had legitimate demands on him. From a distressed duchess, whose picture lay *perdu* under a secret spring of his snuff-box, to a decayed laundress, to whom he might have paid a compliment on the perfect involutions of a frill. It was quite sufficient to be a daughter of Eve to establish a just claim on Sir Sedley’s inheritance from Adam. Again, as an amateur of art, and a respectful servant of every muse, all whom the public had failed to patronise—painter, actor, poet, musician—turned, like dying sunflowers to the sun, towards the pitying smile of Sir Sedley Beaudesert. . . Sir Sedley never made debts, and he never gambled. . . He had but to speak, to smile, in order to throw a whole cohort of dandies into the shade. It was the expression of his countenance that was so bewitching; there was something so kindly in its easy candour, its benign good-nature.’—*The Caxtons*.

‡ The character of Pisistratus is developed, autobiographically, in ‘The Caxtons’ with a good deal of skill, and the reader is attracted by his prudence, honesty, manliness, independence, generosity, and love of truth.

who, in a very delicate conjuncture, acts 'like a gentleman.' George Eliot has given us a gentleman *sui generis* in Felix Holt;\* Lord Beaconsfield, in Ferdinand Armine.† The reader, studying these various types, may be able out of them to construct the ideal gentleman. Tennyson's King Arthur reaches, I think, 'the top of our ideal,' though captious critics pronounce him priggish, and I am free to confess I should like him better if he had shown a little more temper towards that ill-regulated queen of his, the frail Guenivere. But at least he illustrates the poet's own text, that

'Manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

And this kingly knight, this knightly king, seems to me to set forth the principal conditions of the type of a true gentleman, when he requires of his knights—

'To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad, redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honour his own word as if his God's,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds.'

As for the true lady, she will be, of necessity, the counterpart of the true gentleman: pure, refined, generous, sweet of temper, gentle of speech, truthful to her heart's core, shunning the very shadow of evil, instant in well-doing, with the enthusiasm of a Joan of Arc, the exquisite innocence of an Imogen, the devotion of a Desdemona, the frank gaiety of a Rosalind, the

\* 'Felix Holt, the Radical.'

† 'Young, lively, kind, accomplished, good-looking, and well-made, Ferdinand Armine had in him all the elements of popularity. . . . He was not only popular, but proud of being popular. He was popular with the governor, he was popular with his colonel, he was popular with his men, he was popular throughout the garrison. Never was a person so popular as Ferdinand Armine. He was the best rider among them, and the deadliest shot; and he soon became an oracle at the billiard-table, and a hero in the racket-court. His refined education, however, fortunately preserved him from the fate of many other lively youths: he did not degenerate into a mere hero of sports and brawls, the genius of male revels, the arbiter of roistering suppers, and the Comus of a club. His boyish feelings having had their play . . . he returned to his books, his music, and his pencil. He became more quiet, but he was not less liked.'—*Henrietta Temple*.



boundless impassionateness of a St. Theresa. I find her character fairly presented by the old poet, George Chapman :

‘ Noble she is by birth.’

This, however, is not an indispensable quality, and, as a matter of fact, nobility of birth has long ceased to carry with it as a natural corollary nobility of life—

‘ Made good by virtue,  
Exceeding fair, and her behaviour to it  
Is like a singular musician  
To a sweet instrument, or else as doctrine  
Is to the soul, that puts it into act,  
And prints it full of admirable forms,  
Without which ’twere an empty, idle flame.  
Her eminent judgment to dispose those parts  
Sits on her brow, and holds a silver sceptre,  
With which she keeps time to the several musics  
Placed in the sacred concert of her beauties ;  
Love’s complete armoury is managed in her  
To stir affection, and the discipline  
To check and to affright it from attempting  
Any attaint might disproportion her,  
Or make her graces less than circular ;  
Yet even her carriage is as far from coyness  
As from immodesty ; in play, in dancing,  
In suffering courtship, in requiting kindness,  
In use of places, hours, and companies.  
Free as the sun, and nothing more corrupted ;  
As circumspect as Cynthia in her vows,  
And constant as the centre to observe them ;  
Truthful and bounteous, never fierce or dull ;  
In all her courses ever at the full.’

This I take to be the portrait of a true lady—a true woman—such as a father would wish his daughter, such as a lover believes his chosen maiden, to be. To such an one the grace of fine manners would come naturally, as the necessary outcome of all her admirable qualities of mind and heart. In the home she adorned her presence would be as constant sunshine ; discord would flee before her ; her smile would subdue the rebellious, her voice would persuade the obstinate, her example would be to all an inspiration. It would be an embodiment of courtesy, and her life would recommend it to others. ‘ In her tongue,’ says Solomon, when speaking of a perfect woman, ‘ is the law of kindness ;’ and it would be not only in her tongue, but in her heart. Of all such beauteous creatures—thank God, they are not scarce in English homes !—

it may be said, as George Eliot says of her heroine Dorothea, that the effect of their being on those around them is 'incalculably diffusive ; for the improvement of the world depends on acts of which history takes no note ; and that things are not so ill with us as they might have been is in no small degree owing to the number of English ladies who, after living faithfully a noble and devoted life, now sleep in unrecorded graves. Sympathetic with their equals, gracefully deferential towards their superiors, considerate and genial towards their inferiors, they minister by a thousand words and deeds to the happiness of the circles of which they are the centres, and all who know them are, insensibly perhaps, the better for their lives.

'A high-bred English lady,' says Thackeray, 'is the most complete of all Heaven's subjects in this world. In whom else do you see so much grace and so much virtue, so much faith and so much tenderness, with such a perfect refinement and chastity?' And by high-bred ladies, he adds, he does not mean duchesses and countesses, who are not always or necessarily ladies. Be they ever so high in station, however, they can be no more. 'But almost every man,' he says, 'who lives in the world has the happiness, let us hope, of counting a few such persons amongst his circle of acquaintances—women in whose angelical natures there is something awful, as well as beautiful, to contemplate ; at whose feet the wildest and fiercest of us must fall down and humble ourselves in admiration of that adorable purity which never seems to do or to think wrong.' It was said of a certain Lady Elizabeth Hastings, that to have loved her was a liberal education ; just as of some other women, devoted to purposes of religion and philanthropy, it may be said that sympathetically to have known them is to have received a Christian education. Such as these are true women, true ladies, though differing in the nature of their influence and the sphere of their activity. Evelyn, the diarist, and the author of 'Sylva,' sketches in his daughter Mary a gentlewoman of the purest, loftiest kind. The justness of her stature, person, comeliness of countenance, and gracefulness of motion, were the least of her ornaments, compared with her mental gifts. Of early piety, sincerely but not ostentatiously religious, spending a portion of every day in private devotion, reading, and religious exercises, she showed that a devout life is neither an unhappy nor an ungraceful one. She had studied and

mastered many works of history and geography. The French tongue was as familiar to her as English; she understood Italian, and could render 'laudable account' of what she had observed, in which she was assisted by a faithful memory and quick intelligence: Her knowledge of music was sound; and she sang with taste and refinement. No one could read verse or prose better or with more judgment—a great accomplishment in woman; and as she read so she wrote, not only with accuracy but with elegance. These intellectual gifts and graces were as nothing, however, compared with the qualities that adorned her soul. Most dutiful was she to her parents, most loving to her sisters; and she sweetened the home-life by the cheerfulness and agreeableness of her humour. Condescending to the meanest servant in the family, or others, she maintained respect without the least pride. She would often read to them, examine, instruct, and pray with them if they were sick, so as she was exceedingly beloved of everybody.

It is impossible to regard without interest and satisfaction the movement on behalf of the higher education of women that has of late years attained to such very considerable proportions: But while this movement will give us a race of educated women, of cultured women not unfitted to contend with men in the intellectual arena, we must not conclude that it will convert them into ladies. As a rule, education brings with it a certain refinement of taste, perhaps even a certain refinement of manner; but to make up the higher courtesy something more is wanted than taste and politeness. There must be good temper—not the good temper arising from indifference or indolence, but that which is due to a thoughtful observance of one's duties towards one's fellows. There must be sympathy—sympathy which is the golden chain that links hearts and souls together in a permanent and intimate alliance. There must be generosity—a readiness to make allowance for faults and foibles, and a willingness to put the best construction on all that is said and done by those with whom we are brought in contact. Good temper, sympathy, generosity—these are the three pillars which support the radiant fabric of a noble and elevated courtesy. But its crown and capital must be purity—the highest, the most stainless purity, like that of the snow fresh fallen on the mountain-top, before even the wind has ruffled it, or the sunshine touched its virginity—purity of thought and feeling, lighting up and con-



secrating the soul. So it was said by Coleridge of the poet Wordsworth's sister, Dorothy :—‘ In every motion her innocent soul outbeamed so brightly that who saw her would say, “ Guilt was a thing impossible with her.” ’ And so Coventry Patmore sings of his Angel in the House :—

‘ In mind and manners how discreet,  
How artless in her very art ;  
How candid in discourse : how sweet  
The concord of her lips and heart.  
How simple, and how circumspect ;  
How subtle, and how fancy-free ;  
Though sacred to her love, how decked  
With unexclusive courtesy.’

Few of my readers, I suppose, will have met with Bishop Ken's funeral sermon on Lady Maynard. It contains, however, a very fine portrait of a genuine, noble, tender gentlewoman, which may be studied with much advantage. So dutiful was she as a child, that her mother was able to say that in no one instance had she ever offended her. I fear that the reverence once paid by children to their parents has disappeared with other customs and habits of the past we could spare much better ; yet without that reverence no household can be well-ordered, and no household that is not well-ordered can be happy. For nine years of her life Lady Margaret was exposed to the trials and temptations of Society, but they were powerless against her ; she more than conquered the world—she triumphed over it. While leading no ascetic or morose life, she disdained all merely frivolous amusements ; and no empty pomps could occupy that serene soul, whose satisfaction was found in the service of God, and whose recreation it was to do good and to seek the happiness of others. ‘ We are to seek for comfort and joy,’ she would say, ‘ from God's ordinances, and not to take the usual course of the world, to drive away melancholy by exposing ourselves to temptation.’

At peace with God, with her own conscience, with all the world, she was so little given to talk about herself, and was so careful to conceal the activity of her benevolence, that it did not appear at first sight. Yet, after a time, her virtues would break out, whether she would or no. Like Moses, her face shone, and she knew not of it.

Her countenance was always placid rather than cheerful. Her conversation was even and serious, yet easy and affable.

Her interpretations of what others said and did were always conceived in a candid and charitable spirit. Out of humour she could not be ; and she remembered the Scriptural injunction, ' Be angry and sin not.' She was never heard to give an ill character, to pass a hard censure, to speak an idle word. For small talk she had as little liking as for scandal ; she ' opened her mouth in wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness.' Her reproofs were grave and just, but tempered with mildness. To the afflicted she administered consolation from her own manifold experience of the Divine goodness ; for she behaved with so condoling a tenderness, that she seemed to take the burden of their anguish upon herself.

For all in misery her sympathy was prompt. Besides her private alms, which were so bestowed that her left hand knew not what her right hand gave, she was a ' common patroness' to the poor and needy, and a common physician to her sick neighbours. Often would she with her own hands dress their most loathsome sores, and sometimes keep them in her family, where she gave them both diet and lodging till they were cured. She would then clothe them, and send them home to give God thanks for their recovery. If they died, her charity accompanied them sometimes to the very grave, and she took care even of their burial.

In her family she united Martha and Mary together. While assiduously attentive to her domestic duties, she did not neglect ' the better part.' The business of every day she managed with a wise frugality, with a constant deference to God's merciful providence, and with entire freedom from either covetous fears or restless anxiety. She lovingly endeavoured to make all who attended her more God's servants than her own, and treated them with meekness, indulgence, and condescension, like one who was always mindful that she too had a Master in heaven. Her frequent employment in such hours as she could properly spare to herself was prayer and praise. She had devotions suited to all the primitive hours of prayer, for which she had transcribed many excellent forms out of several authors. With David (and like Bishop Andrewes) she praised God seven times a day, or supplied the want of these solemn hours by a kind of perpetuity of ejaculations, which she had ready to answer all occasions, and to fill up all vacant intervals. And if she chanced to be wakeful in the night, she was never unprovided with proper

prayers. 'Thus did this gracious soul, having been enkindled by fire from heaven in her baptism, live a continual sacrifice, and kept the fire always burning, always in ascension, always aspiring towards heaven, from whence it fell.'

To prayer she added meditation and study of the Holy Scriptures and of other serious and devout books, in which she spent most of her time. Her religion was not grounded on the indifference of an unceasing faith, or imbibed from education only, but proceeded from intelligent conviction, after careful study directed by God's Holy Spirit, whose guidance she daily invoked. Her choice was made—it rested immovable as a rock; and so well satisfied was she in the Catholic Faith as professed and set forth by the Church of England, that to the strictness of a primitive saint she joined, we may believe, the resolution of a martyr. In an age when the generality of the nation were like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, she clung steadfastly to the Communion of the Church of England. When the priests and services of God were driven into corners, she daily resorted, in spite of every difficulty, to the public prayers. Nor did her zeal, stimulated by opposition into energy, grow faint and languid in the hour of prosperity. Morning and evening she offered up to God the public offices, and when she was not able to go to the House of Prayer she had them read to her in her chamber. Her devotions were enlarged on the fasts and festivals of the Church, but especially on the Lord's Day, the hours of which she divided between the church and her closet. She never failed, when opportunity offered, to approach the Holy Altar.

When she returned home, she called to mind and wrote down from memory abstracts of the sermons she heard in church, that she might be not only a hearer of the Word, but a doer also.

To her husband she was the immediate gift of God, sent by propitious heaven, for a good angel, as well as for a wife. As a mother, she evinced an unspeakable tenderness and loving thoughtfulness towards her children. The servants respected her, and her friends loved her.

Such was Lady Maynard, a woman of the seventeenth century. I set her at full length before my readers, not because any one of them will fulfil their duties in exactly the same manner, or act upon the same views of life; but because I am

persuaded that the nearer they approach to her example, the nearer will they approach to the ideal of a true lady. I offer it as a contrast, moreover, to the example of too many women of the present day in the higher social circles, who seem to regard life as made up of levities, and whose chief cares seem to be the out-vying one another in a luxuriousness of dress, which often touches on the very verge of indecorum, the exhibition of themselves in a strange variety of photographic representations, and the feverish pursuit of the lower and meaner kinds of pleasure.

Women of fashion pay more heed to the requirements of etiquette than the conditions of culture; but the true gentlewoman will neglect neither. And while studying the art of good breeding, and cultivating her mind and taste with assiduity, she will not be unobservant of the responsibilities of the household-manager. She will know how completely the happiness of home depends on her orderliness, her method, her punctuality, her preservation of a firm but gentle rule. The lady will not forget that she should also be the housewife. The famous Duchess of Newcastle, who was so conspicuous a figure among the ladies of the Court of the Restoration, who wrote 'The World's Olio' and 'Philosophic Fancies,' flirted with men of science, and disported herself in all the bravery and pageantry of rank and wealth, but 'understood the keeping of sheep and ordering of a grange indifferently well,' has left on record a lively sketch of what she conceived to have been her educational deficiencies. 'My thoughts,' she writes, 'although not my actions, have been so busily employed about housewifery these three or four days, as I could think of nothing else.' Having heard her neighbours say that her waiting-maids were spoiled with idleness, she resolved to set them an example of industry, and personally superintend their work. Therefore, she writes:—'I sent for the governess of my house, and bid her give orders to have flax and wheels bought, for I wish my maids would sit and spin.

'The governess, hearing me say so, smiled to think what uneven threads I would spin. "For," said she, "though nature has made you a spinster in poetry, yet education has not made you a spinster in housewifery, and you will spoil more flax than get cloth for your spinning."

'Then I bid her leave me to consider of some other work

and, when I was by myself alone, I called into my mind several sorts of wrought works, most of which, though I had will, yet I had no skill to work ; for which I did inwardly complain of my education, that my mother did not force me to work with a needle. At last I pitched upon making silk flowers, for I did remember when I was a girl I saw my sisters make silk flowers, and I had made some, although ill-favouredly ; whereupon I sent for the governess of my house again, and told her that I would have her buy several coloured silks, for I was resolved to employ my time in making silk flowers. She told me she would obey my commands, but, said she, “Madam, neither you, nor any that serves you, can do them so well as those who make it their trade ; neither can you make them so cheap as they will sell them out of their shops, wherefore you had better buy these toys, if you desire them.”

‘Then I told her I would preserve, for it was summer-time, and the fruit fresh and ripe upon the trees. She asked me for whom I would preserve, for I seldom did eat sweetmeats myself, nor made banquets for strangers, unless I meant to feed my household servants with them. “Besides,” said she, “you may keep half a score of servants with the money that is laid out in sugar and coals, which go to the preserving only of a few sweetmeats.”’

The duchess’s little narrative may be accepted as a warning against the folly of undertaking work that is specially a servant’s, or work that is superfluous and expensive ; but it remains a fact that to the comfort of home the direct and constant supervision of the mistress is essential. And it is part of a lady’s duty to give that supervision.

Method is the oil that makes the wheels of the domestic machine run easily. The master and mistress of a house who desire order, and the tranquillity that comes of order, must insist on the application of method to every branch and department of the household work. To be well done, a thing must be done at the proper time and in the proper way. There must be a time and a place for everything ; and everything must be in its proper time and place. Nothing is more fatal to home-comfort than the habit of dawdling, of lingering over a little task in a desultory and indolent spirit, of going from one bit of work to another, and finishing neither. Example is better than precept ; and if the rulers of the household display a



vigorously active spirit, all who serve under them will be animated by it.

So much of our lives is spent at home that everybody is interested in making and keeping home happy. Among the indispensable elements of this happiness will be found not only good temper, and method, and industry, but a disposition to temperate enjoyment. Some persons ensure their own misery and the misery of others by the inordinate prominence they give to trivial worries—the fly in the ointment, the flaw in the sheet of glass—magnifying them until they assume a bulk which seems to shut out everything else from their gaze. So irritable and apprehensive is their temperament, and so great is their want of self-control, that the smallest crosses affect them profoundly; their sensitive skin feels a pin-prick as keenly as if it were a spear-thrust. Persons thus constituted inflict upon themselves an almost incalculable amount of misery; misery not the less real because it is not justified by any actual condition of things, but originates in supersensitiveness and timidity, or in vanity and overweening self-consciousness. I have known a man worried all day by a crease in his coat, and a woman by the discovery that her cook had followers. Heaven help the poor wretches who thus clothe themselves in hair-shirts of their own making, and persist in travelling about with the peas in their shoes unboiled! Why not treat these petty vexations with cool indifference, so that they may cease to have the power to annoy you? Why devote yourselves to lamentations, doleful as those of Jeremiah, and microscopic annoyances which it is easy to keep under-foot? Put your heel upon them, and have done with them, but do not lift your heel until they no longer have the power to wound you. Is it a bluebottle that buzzes in your ear? Brush it aside, my friend, and don't fret yourself into a belief that you are haunted by some winged monster!

Excellent is the advice given by Richard Brathwait to ladies who have to lead their households by their example, and govern them by their wise words:—‘Let not an action proceed from you,’ he says, ‘which is not exemplary good. Those that are followers of your persons, will be followers likewise of your lives. You may wean them from vice, win them to virtue, and make them your constant followers in the serious practice of piety. Let your virtues clothe them within, as their veils do

without. They deserve not their wage who desist from imitating you in actions of worth. Your private family is a familiar nursery; plants of all sorts are there bestowed. Cheer and cherish those that be tender; but curb and correct those of wilder temper. Free and fruitful scions cannot be improved till the luxurious branches be pruned. But above all things take especial care that those vices spread not in you, which are censured by you. You are sovereigns in your families; neither extend your hand too much to rigour, neither contract it by showing too much remissness. Let neither virtue pass unrewarded, nor vice, if it grow domineering, pass unreproved.'

At home, as abroad, what we should specially cultivate is—manners. An accomplished person is, unquestionably, a social boon; we are all indebted to, and learn to take an interest in, a person who plays well, sings well, draws well, or dances well: who thus contributes to everybody's enjoyment. But a fine-mannered person is even of greater benefit to the domestic or the social circle. His influence makes the wheels of the machine move so much more easily; we are unconsciously affected by his example, and learn from him (or her) to speak more gently, to behave to one another with greater forbearance, to evince a greater readiness to oblige one another. Our comfort in life depends very much upon trifles. We can't sleep well if the feathers in our pillow are collected in little heaps. The gravy is spoiled if a cinder fall into it. A smoky chimney will disorganise a household for the week. Now, the philosophy of fine manners is based on attention to trifles, such trifles as manuals of etiquette set forth with so much elaboration; and hence its importance to the general well-being. If George slam the door as he leaves the room, or Kate give a pettish answer to Florence's question, the family peace may be disturbed for the rest of the day. It is an unfortunate fact that many of us put off our manners as we put off our boots, on the threshold of home, and seem to imagine that politeness is not for 'consumption on the premises.' You may hear a brother reply to his sister in a tone which if used towards Neæra, would ensure his speedy dismissal, and a sister often snaps and snarls at her brother with an acerbity which she would shrink from betraying in conversation with a stranger. But courtesy is not like a dress-suit, to be worn only on

‘company occasions.’ It ought to be the motive principle of all our conduct, ought to enter into every part of our daily life. It should be as natural to us as our speech or sight. For though it is greatly concerned with trifles, it is upon no trifle that it takes its stand ; the law that supports, and cherishes, and controls it was laid down by a Divine law-giver : ‘Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you.’ This is the whole secret of good manners. In these few words is comprehended the whole code of courtesy. Put everybody upon the same level as yourself, and put yourself into everybody’s place. Neither lightly give nor take offence. Let your word bind you as surely as your oath. Say not a word more or less than that which you conceive to be the truth. Apply these main considerations to the daily affairs of life, and you will be justly reputed for your fine manners. ‘Good manners,’ says Swift, ‘is the art of making those people easy with whom we converse.’ I go farther, and say that good manners is the art of making happy those people whom we live with. The great Lord Chatham defines politeness as benevolence in trifles, or the preference of others to ourselves in little daily, hourly occurrences in the commerce of life, and this seems to me the better definition. He continues : ‘A better place, a more commodious seat, priority in being helped at table, and the like, what is it but sacrificing ourselves in such trifles to the convenience and pleasure of others?’ And this constitutes true politeness. It is a perpetual attention—by habit it grows easy and natural to us—to the little wants of those we are with, by which we either prevent or satisfy them. Bowing, ceremonious formal compliments, stiff civilities, will never be politeness ; that must be easy, natural, unstudied, manly, noble. And what will give this but a mind benevolent and perpetually attentive to exert the amiable disposition in trifles towards all you converse and live with ? Benevolence in greater matters takes a higher name, and is the germ of virtues. It is possible to teach the laws of etiquette, because these are very conventional ; but the laws of politeness cannot be taught, they spring from the heart. Fine manners, in their highest manifestation, are the expression of a generous temper, a refined taste, and a cultivated mind ; they are part and parcel of the individual ; not that manners make the man, but that the man makes the manners. Therefore, what



a man is in the home circle he will be in society. If he be cheerful, impetuous, egotistic, selfish at home, so will he be abroad, though he may deceive for a time a careless observer by assuming the varnish of conventionality.

From this point of view politeness becomes a virtue and a brilliant one, for it is nothing less than a form of self-denial. You make way for this person, you fall behind that, you give up your seat to a third, because it will please those persons ; therefore you consult their pleasure rather than your own. Carry this motive into all your daily conduct, and see how it will be elevated and transfigured ! The noblest charity, the loftiest self-denial, the truest generosity, these, we see, centre in and are bound up with good manners. It was because he regarded them in this light that Burke declared them to be of more importance than laws. 'Upon them,' I repeat his dictum, 'in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarise or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole force and colour to our lives. According to their quality they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them.'

It is for this reason that we are all of us so intimately interested in the existence of good manners. In no small degree our happiness, or, at least, the ease and tranquillity of our lives, depends upon them. I have already intimated my opinion of the extent to which they influence the domestic life, and I suppose that most of my readers have had personal experience of their genial power. The members of a family circle will have fallen upon some topic which originates opposite opinions ; they differ, and express their difference in animated language ; the language grows hotter and stronger as the dispute is prolonged ; frowns darken every brow, and every eye flashes with an unloving light ; retorts are exchanged and biting sarcasms—the rupture is complete. But, suddenly, in upon the stormy scene comes a new presence : it is that of a brother or sister, father or mother, imbued with the true spirit of Christian courtesy. In a few minutes all is changed. A judicious word or two, a kindly smile, the influence of a calm and equable manner, have set the disputants at peace with one another, although they are probably ignorant of the magic that has wrought the altera-

tion. And so, too, at a so-called friendly gathering, you see everything going wrong : the guests separated one from another by a constantly-increasing barrier of reserve, and a general air of gloom settling down upon the whole, when, all at once, a person enters who seems gifted with a spell like that of the old magicians, before which the evil spirits vanish, the gloom disappears, the ice thaws, the partition-walls of conventionalism are overthrown, and everybody settles down to the enjoyment of a pleasant evening !

Wonderful power of manners ! I should be inclined to ascribe to them as great a potency as beauty possesses. No doubt they go far to supply the want of beauty, and constitute the secret of that fascination which we so often see exerted by persons who cannot claim to be beautiful. Spenser is surely right when he explains the attraction exercised by Sir Calidore in the court of the 'Faerie Queene,' as centring in this all-powerful grace. Amongst all the knights of the Fairy Court, he says, none was more courteous than Calidore, and he was beloved of all. In him it seemed that—

‘Gentleness of spirit  
And manners mild were planted natural ;  
To which he added comely guise withal,  
And *gracious speech did steal men’s hearts away* :  
Nathlesse thereto he was full stout and tall,  
And well-approved in battailous affray,  
That him did much renown, and for his fame display.’

The poet here indicates that the most exquisite courtesy is not incompatible with manliness of spirit and the highest physical courage. Effeminacy is not politeness, and, in truth, the feeble can never attain to the perfection of fine manners.

‘Ne was there knight, ne was there lady found,  
In Fairy Court, but him did dear embrace  
*For his fair usage and conditions sound,*  
The which in all men’s liking gainèd place,  
And with the greatest purchast greatest grace,  
Which he could wisely use and well apply,  
To please the best and th’ evil to embase ;  
For he loathed leasing and base flattery,  
And lovèd simple truth and steadfast honesty.’

I must touch, however, upon some of the minor observances by which the vulgar judge of a man’s courtesy. ‘Nothing,’ says a shrewd man of the world, ‘nothing more clearly in-

dicates the true gentleman than a desire evinced to oblige or *accommodate*, whenever it is possible or *reasonable*; it proves the broad distinction between the well-bred man of the world, and the coarse and brutal crowd—the irreclaimably vulgar—vulgar, not from their inferiority of station, but because *they are coarse and brutal*. Nevertheless, we often find persons so selfish and supercilious, and of so equivocal an importance, that they fancy any compliance with the wishes of the many would tend to lessen their dignity in the eyes of their companions, and who foolishly imagine that a good coat places them above the necessity of conciliating the feelings of the multitude by the performance of an act of courtesy. It is evident there cannot be a greater mistake, since even the lower classes (whatever their own practices may be) kindly appreciate, and gratefully acknowledge, the slightest consideration shown to them by their superiors. That persons should be found weak enough to believe themselves above courtesy is lamentable, as such silliness can only expose them to the ridicule of their equals, and the contempt of their superiors.'

True politeness requires that the young shall respect the old, the strong the feeble, and man woman. He who in a public place of entertainment or a public conveyance seats himself while a lady is standing, receives at once the emphatic reproach of being 'no gentleman.' The man who, at a railway station, let us say, or wherever else men and women may be congregated, takes his stand in front of the fire, with his coat-tails expanded so as to concentrate all the warmth, is—'no gentleman.' He who, while conversing with a lady, continues to puff away at cigar or pipe, so that the smoke is carried into the delicate nostrils, is—'no gentleman.' He who, when people are taking their tickets, pushes headlong through them—past half-a-dozen ladies, or men far advanced in years, is—'no gentleman.' Nor, again, is he a gentleman who, presuming on his large house in Westbournia and the big balance at his banker's, stalks to and fro, with nose in the air, as if all the world were far beneath him, and loses no opportunity of proclaiming his wealth and his servile devotion to it.

It is the duty of every member of a family, I repeat, to do all he can to promote the happiness of the other members. It is necessary, therefore, to bear and forbear; to make mutual concessions; to keep down selfishness; to cultivate a love of

justice and honour ; to get rid of our petty likes and dislikes ; to conquer and control our temper. Much may be done by a nice attention to the requirements of etiquette ; by an observance of those laws which govern the decencies and proprieties of life. There is no reason why a husband should not treat his wife with exquisite politeness ; why a wife should not remember that her husband has a claim to be treated like a gentleman ; why the finest manners should not be observed by brothers and sisters. This mutual courtesy, inspired by mutual love, would purify the atmosphere of home, and invest with a new dignity our domestic relations. Let us make etiquette a matter of household concern ; seeing it touches us as nearly as the price per pound of soap, salt, or sugar. Why are we to throw off our politeness, like a cloak, when we cross our own threshold ? Why should not our mother or sisters claim from us those graceful observances which we make it a point of honour to vouchsafe to strangers ? The man who stands with his hat on in the presence of his mother and sister, manifests thereby such a want of apprehension of the requirements of filial and fraternal reverence and affection—of the rudiments of true domestic loyalty—as, if circumstances do not combine to correct him, will in the long-run render him fit for treason, stratagems, and spoils ; he sets at nought feelings and principles which would interpose one of the most important barriers between himself and crime. It would not be surprising if such a man were to finish his career in the dock or the hulks ! he lacks the true nobility and elevation of sentiment, without which he will not, and he cannot, come to good.

The happiness of home will be promoted by a due attention to recreation. The heads of a family should see that its younger members are provided with wholesome amusements ; and the cultivation of music or drawing, the reading aloud of good books, the introduction of a dance or a round game, will help wonderfully to facilitate the smooth passage of the hours. Man cannot live by bread alone ; his mind must be cheered, his heart lightened by the supply of refining pastimes. *Dulce est desipere in loco* ; that is, in the bosom of one's family, for nowhere else will enjoyment be purer or more genuine. The gloom which lies about some households is distressing : the father never smoothes the furrows of his brow, the mother's countenance never loses its shadow, the daughter's lips never brighten into



a smile, the son's voice never breaks out into hearty laughter. They keep their weariness and sadness for home consumption.

I am willing to subscribe to whatever anyone may say in praise of music. It is one of God's greatest gifts for making men happy. It is the only form in which we can express those thoughts and feelings which are too noble to be embodied in words, even in the words of the poets. It is the revelation of the inner harmonies of our spiritual nature. Carlyle calls it a kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that ; but I ask any true lover of music whether it is, indeed, inarticulate? Unfathomable it may be, in the sense that we have not yet dived into all its meanings. Thinking thus of music, I am glad that the cultivation of it enters into the ordinary curriculum of modern education. It is a great social instrument—to look at it in no higher light—and in the home-circle its influence purifies, elevates, and strengthens. There will be no want, I think, of affection or confidence in the family where the young men and maidens help to make home happy in the evenings by their combined performances, their skilful blending of voices and instruments. A twofold harmony is created ; a harmony outward and inward ; a moral harmony as well as a harmony of sounds. Did you ever reflect what a void would be left in the world if music, or the art of it, could be forgotten? What would become of our pageants, our processions, our public welcomes of kings and statesmen? What would become of the pomp of royalty? How the martial array would suffer when not inspired by the strain, and attuned to the measure, of 'flutes and recorders'! Where would be the awe and majesty, or the exultation and tenderness, of our religious services? All the charms of truth and pleasure would lose their joyaunce! Love would be denied its choicest vehicle of expression ; mirth would be limited to laughter, which has but a poor faculty of significance. To lose the sublime swell and roll of the organ, which always seems to me to carry with it the mystery of the sea ; to lose the ringing notes of the clarion ; to lose the wonderful compass of the violin ; to lose the blare of the trumpet and the liquid melody of the flute—ah me ! who can estimate the full extent of such a loss? The world without music would be a voiceless desert ; life without music would be wanting in its purest inspiration.

But I am wandering from my object, which is to proclaim the value of music as an accomplishment. Everybody with an ear should learn an instrument ; everybody with a voice should learn to sing ; and this not so much for the entertainment of others as for his own personal advantage. ‘That which I have found the best recreation both to my mind and body,’ says Bishop Beveridge, ‘whensoever either of them stands in need of it, is music, which exercises at once both my body and soul ; especially when I play myself, for then, methinks, the same motion that my hand makes upon the instrument, the instrument makes upon my heart. It calls in my spirits, composes my thoughts, delights my ear, recreates my mind, and so not only fits me for after-business, but fills my heart, at the present, with pure and useful thoughts ; so that when the music sounds the sweetliest in my ears, truth commonly flows the clearest into my mind. And hence it is that I find my soul is become more harmonious by being accustomed to so much harmony, and so averse to all manners of discord, that the least jarring sounds, either in notes or words, seem very harsh and unpleasant to me.’ To pause in the day’s occupations, and play a sonata of Beethoven, or one of Mendelssohn’s *lieder*, or a bit of Mozart or Bach, or to sing some manly English ballad, or some tender air of Bellini or Gounod, or take part in a good glee, is to the mind like a bath to the tired body—it refreshes and invigorates. The nervous system is happily composed ; the imagination gains a fresh activity ; the judgment grows clearer ; we put on the new man.

There is ample choice of instruments. For men, if they have the requisite musical faculty, I know of none more fit than the violin, but it is not to be mastered except by the most resolute perseverance. Certain sins, it is said, can be conquered only by fasting and prayer—the same may be said of the violin. Giardini, I think, asserted that to become a good violinist you must play twelve hours a day for twenty years ; but you may well be content with a shorter probation and a less complete absorption of your time. Two hours a day of good, steadfast, intelligent practice will, in three or four years, enable you to get a glimpse of what can and should be done by the violin. He who scrapes at its chords to produce a jerking polka or a commonplace waltz knows as little of its real capabilities as a child who has just learned the alphabet.



knows of the capacities of written speech. He may be a tolerable fiddler, but he is nothing of a violinist. Do not, my dear sir, on the strength of your rendering of certain polka airs, presume to inflict yourself and your instrument on your friends and acquaintances. You must not make their drawing-rooms your place of practice. They don't want your oddities, your imperfections ; they can wait, and so can you. The annals of the Inquisition record nothing equal to the tortures which are every day inflicted upon innocent people by barbarous amateurs,—young men who have been 'learning' the violin for three or six months, and then presume to harass Society with their catgut exasperations. Once when I accompanied some country cousins through the Tower of London, an attendant beefeater showed us an instrument of torture called the 'scavenger's daughter.' It was uncanny, I grant you, but nothing compared to a violin in the hands of a bad or inexperienced player. But stop ! There is one thing worse—a cornet—a badly-played *cornet-à-piston*. You know what it is in the hands of a fine musician. But you don't know, perhaps, what it is in the hands of an audacious youth engaged in brutally murdering 'Casta Diva !' I think that even the bagpipe can convey no greater agony to the soul. Clarence, when describing that bad dream of his, speaks of 'a dreadful noise of waters' in his ears. He lived before the invention of the cornet, or he would have been aware of a noise more dreadful still.

The cornet is not for ladies, happily. Minerva, we know, was partial to the flute until she discovered that in playing it she distorted her countenance *most unlovelily*; but the disfigurement caused by the mild 'tootling' of the flute is as nothing compared to the hideous expansion of the cheeks induced by the action of the cornet. A lady with a cornet would be *monstrum horrendum*. I dare not admit the possible realisation of the poet's vision :

Lo ! in that house of misery  
A lady with a horn I see,  
Steal thief-like through the gloom,  
And flit from room to room.

And oh, in no sweet dream of bliss,  
The tearful listener turns to kiss  
The shadow, as it falls  
Upon the echoing walls,

For 'tis as if a wail should be  
Raised by some soul in misery,  
When each sad-sounding note  
Gasps in the o'er-strain'd throat.

That frightful cornet echoes long  
The fragment of a broken song,  
No sadder e'er could be  
Set in the key of D.

Few ladies adopt the violin, though some, as everybody knows, have obtained a wonderful command of it, and I do not see why it should not become a lady's instrument. It does not exact more time for practice than the piano, nor does it entail greater labour, and it is by no means ungraceful when properly managed. I have seen a lady play it without an ungraceful attitude or any of those facial contortions by which some players apparently hope to impose themselves upon you for inspired sibyls. But, now that the harp has fallen out of favour, there is probably no instrument so popular among ladies of all ages as the piano. Unfortunately, popular as it is, and many as are the hours devoted to its practice, one seldom hears it well played by amateurs. The school of musical pyrotechny has still too many followers; and when a young lady sits down to the piano, as a rule, we may expect an immediate display of digital fireworks. And if it be rare to meet with good players, players possessing a thorough sympathy with the instrument, and imbued with the spirit of the great masters, it is rarer still to meet with graceful players. I could almost believe some ladies consider it essential to the success of their drawing-room performances that the listeners (or spectators) shall be startled into contemplation of their engaging attitudes. Some 'wobble' upon their tripod as if it were a reproduction of the Laurentian gridiron; others throw themselves alternately to right and left, as if preparing for the trapeze; others sit bolt upright, like a grenadier on parade. Some there are who bring their hands down upon the unoffending instrument with a crash like that of a pavior's hammer; others there are who fling them up into the air at every pause, as if supplicating pardon from St. Cecilia. Note also your nervous player, who drops her handkerchief half-a-dozen times, is unable to seat herself comfortably upon her stool, upsets the music-book just as she begins to play, and, after stammering through broken chords and lame arpeggios, suddenly breaks

down with the pitiful declaration that her memory is, 'Oh, really—yes—so bad, you know!' and hurries to hide her blushes in the obscurest corner. On the other hand, you sometimes meet with the serenely-audacious player. Opened full before her is the well-wrought composition of a great master; for the nonce it is hers, to work her wicked will with it. Away she fires, 'through bush, through briars,' through exquisite undulations, up complex crescendos, along cunning cantabiles, always with the same breathless velocity, and always with the same heartlessness; omitting a bar here, dropping a chord there, striking half-a-dozen erroneous notes in every page—blurring, confusing, disorganising the composer's fair ideas—and, at the conclusion of the massacre, rising with a smiling face as if to demand the applause of her despairing auditors!

It is the mistake, not seldom, of skilled musicians to put before a drawing-room audience a composition of inordinate length. To what they choose they do justice; but ah, life is short and art is long—sometimes eighteen pages long!—and at an evening entertainment there is no time for so much 'linked sweetness long drawn out.' Believe me, at times one may have too much of a good thing, even of a very good thing. It is with a feeling of despair that one sits and watches their composed passage from page to page when one is longing to cross the room and sit 'with Amaryllis in the shade.' Music is not a substitute for conversation; but the two, like wine and walnuts, should be taken together. At evening parties the piece selected should be short and agreeable movements; the best music undoubtedly—it is a waste of time to listen to bad or indifferent music—but movements which will not fatigue the hearer nor, by their complex character, make too much demand upon his attention.

In the family circle the piano is a constant treasury of delight, and a perennial source of refined enjoyment. How dull would be the winter nights without it! How should we entertain ourselves, or our friends, when they come for 'cosy evenings,' if we could not recur to this enchanting instrument, which enables us to unlock the secret riches of the genius of Mozart, and Bach, and Beethoven, and many another illustrious musician? It soothes us in our hours of despondency—and even the brightest, happiest lives cannot escape such hours; it affords us an eloquent means of expressing our lighter feelings

in our hours of pleasure and exultation. I never sit down to it without recalling those graceful verses of Leigh Hunt, in which he seeks to do justice to this old and universal friend, whom we barely value enough because its presence is so familiar :

' O friend, whom glad or grave we seek,  
 Heaven-holding shrine !  
 I ope thee, touch thee, hear thee speak,  
 And peace is mine.  
 No fairy casket, full of bliss,  
 Outvalues thee ;  
 Love only, wakened with a kiss,  
 More sweet may be.  
 ' To thee, when our full hearts o'erflow  
 In griefs or joys,  
 Unspeakable emotions owe  
 A fitting voice :  
 Mirth flies to thee, and love's unrest,  
 And Memory dear,  
 And Sorrow, with his tightened breast,  
 Comes for a tear.  
 ' Oh, since no joy of human mould  
 There waits us still,  
 Thrice bless'd be thine, thou gentle fold  
 Of peace at will.  
 No change, no sullenness, no cheat,  
 In thee we find ;  
 Thy saddest voice is ever sweet,  
 Thine answer kind.'

And the same writer, in his pleasant, picturesque prose, reminds us, very justly, that a pianoforte is really a most agreeable object. It is a piece of furniture with a soul in it, which at our touch wakens into life, and charms us with the power of its beauty. Open or shut, it is (or should be) pleasant to look at, though it looks best when it is open, and seems to smile at us with its ivory keys, 'like the mouth of a sweet singer.' The keys of a pianoforte are in themselves an agreeable spectacle : the colour of the white keys is not a cold white, for whereas in white marble there is always an idea of coldness, there is no such idea in the white of ivory. The black furnish a kind of tessellation, like Roman pavements ; and all are deliciously smooth and easy to the touch. Then there is another advantage in the piano which amateurs can appreciate ; the tone is ready made. Touch the keys, and the music flows at once, like water from the rock when Moses struck it. Another advantage is, that it contains within its case a small orchestra ; each of

your fingers plays the part of a separate instrument. No other, except the organ, furnishes such a combination of sounds ; and the organ itself cannot do for you what the pianoforte does. The organ is less manageable, less convenient, and less flexible. It is the leviathan of instruments, and whatever it does, it does in the fashion of a leviathan. It will not play anything and everything for you, as the piano does, which, while excelling in light and lively music, renders even the grandest with force and expression.

People who own a pianoforte—and who does not nowadays ?—will naturally use it as an accompaniment to singing. This is an accomplishment which adds immeasurably to the grace and happiness of home. I know of nothing more delightful than a domestic glee-party—father, and mother, and children beguiling the sweet evening hours by the performance of those glees and part-songs in which English music is so rich. Or a brother and a sister joining in a duet—or a fair young wife warbling with full and liquid voice, while her husband sustains her on the piano—can anything be more delightful ? Or the household performance, in the quiet of a Sunday evening, of some noble anthem, or of those fine hymns which we owe to the genius of Webbe, and Dykes, and Barnby, and Sullivan ? What a charm, what an air of poetry is thus thrown over our domestic relations ! How the music seems naturally to enter into them, softening, elevating, inspiring, and controlling them ; becoming, as it were, a constant fountain of peace, and confidence, and love ! There can be no quarrels, no discords, in a family thus bound together by the golden bond of music ; the habit of taking their proper parts in the compositions they render with so much enjoyment, will accustom them to take their proper parts in the household order, and all will work harmoniously together.

As to singing for one's friends, in the drawing-room or at amateur concerts, one should certainly be willing to do so, always provided one *can* sing. But to sing, one requires—first, a voice ; second, an ear. Nor is this all ; one must have natural taste, and be well taught. We have no right—none of us—to inflict imperfection on our friends ; what we give them should be of the best. If we cannot sing well enough to make it worth while for people to listen, we may still amuse ourselves in our own chamber.



‘Will you not join in the music?’ says Deronda to Gwendolin, in George Eliot’s novel.

‘I join in it by listening,’ she replies. ‘I am fond of music.’

‘Are you not a musician?’

‘I have given a great deal of time to music. But I have not talent enough to make it worth while. I shall never sing again.’

‘But if you are fond of music, *it will always be worth while in private, for your own delight*,’ says Deronda. ‘I make it a virtue to be content with my middlingness—it is always pardonable, so that one does not ask others to take it for superiority.’

It is a serious fault of amateur singers that they perseveringly select songs beyond the compass of their voice, and out of the range of their powers—dashing operatic bravuras and scenas which only a trained vocalist can give successfully; which, even when sung by professional skill, produce little effect for want of their theatrical accessories. An amateur singer should be careful to keep within her measure; to choose nothing which she cannot execute without strain; to take good heed that the music is not only within her vocal range, but suitable to her style. What can be more ridiculous than to hear a dumpy little woman screeching through the prima donna’s air in ‘Semiramide,’ or to witness a comfortable-looking, round-faced, smiling young lady, who has never felt a pang and does not know what emotion means, labouring through some passionate utterance of heart-broken love? Male amateurs notoriously err in this direction. Decent Algernon Jones, whose appearance is the very impersonation of sleek good-humour, breaks out into a furious demand for vengeance; and burly Plantagenet Fitzboodle, with his hirsute countenance and Anak-like proportions, endeavours to tone down his rough hard voice to a despairing swain’s ‘*andantino cantabile*.’

Another caution may be administered to amateurs. Do not imagine that in singing you need not articulate your words; your hearers have a right to feel offended if you will not take the trouble to speak plainly. Choose a good song, in which true poetry is happily wedded to true melody, a song adapted both to your voice and style, and articulate it so that the words, as well as the notes, shall be distinctly heard, and you will receive the hearty thanks of your audience. This was the secret of the success of the poet Moore’s singing. His



voice was limited and weak, but he had some good notes in it, and he was careful that the songs he chose should bring them out ; and then, every word he uttered was clearly audible, every word told, and every word was given with due expression. The same effect, we read, was produced by the singing of the late Mrs. Lockhart, the daughter of Sir Walter Scott. She generally sang her father's poetry set to music, and her taste, her feeling, and truth of expression riveted the attention, though her voice had little power. The great charm of Jenny Lind's singing was this bell-like clearness of articulation. And obviously there can be no reason why a song should be muttered and mouthed like the incantation of some juggling necromancer. Do you know Shelley's lines 'To Constantia, singing'? The poet exclaims :

'Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers  
O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,  
The blood and life within those snowy fingers  
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.  
My brain is wild, my breath comes quick—  
The blood is listening in my frame.'

How absurd these lines would seem if addressed to ninety-nine out of every hundred amateur singers ! Absurd for this very conclusive reason, that the hearer cannot distinguish a word they say—can never extract any meaning from the jumble of syllables they pour into his perplexed ears. Some professional vocalists make the same mistake. It is said of Catalani that once, when she was singing 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' one of the audience carefully took down in writing her version of its words, and the line 'She was bold as the hawk and as fresh as the dawn' came out, according to Catalani, in this astounding form, 'She poulticed the hock and salted it down !'

A lady, when asked to sing, should at once comply. The little farcical comedy of insincere excuses and pretended apologies in which some indulge is an insult to the hostess and her company. Assent at once, or at once decline if you have a satisfactory excuse to offer. When you have finished, rise from the piano, and do not be induced to sing again immediately, unless in very unusual circumstances. There are others waiting to sing, who will resent your monopolising time and attention : and the audience, I fear, in spite of their professions of interest and expectancy, will secretly be conscious of a sense

of weariness. Nor will you be doing justice to yourself: your voice will be fatigued, will lose its freshness, and your intonation will grow uncertain. No person should sing more than twice in the same evening.

It is not advisable, at an evening party, to allow the songs to succeed one another too closely. Intervals should be allowed for conversation; everybody is not a musical enthusiast. 'A song now and then,' says *Αγώγις*, 'is very desirable, as it is a relief to conversation; but half a dozen consecutively, even from St. Cecilia in person, would become a bore. Besides which, people are now accustomed to hear popular songs executed by those whose profession it is with a superiority rarely attainable in private life, so that amateurs seldom do more than provoke unfortunate comparisons. However, when highly-gifted musicians *are* found in private society, we have generally observed their delicacy to be in proportion to their excellence.' The hostess should not sing more than once, or at the utmost twice, lest censorious tongues should whisper that she has collected her friends for no other purpose than to display before them her gifts as a vocalist. And if her gifts be few and doubtful, how those tongues will wag, to be sure!

Let us turn for a moment to another branch, or side, of home culture. We are largely influenced by our surroundings; and it is difficult to live a refined life unless everything around us breathes refinement. When, in some of our large towns, I see those long hideous rows of two-storied tenements of brick, with their dull façades unrelieved by the smallest attempt at ornament, and know that the interior in each case matches the exterior in hideous uniformity—the ceilings of a dingy white, with mean mouldings of plaster; the walls hung with paper-hangings of the worst design, the most obtrusive patterns imaginable—I ask myself if it be a matter of wonder that the lives lived within them are equally monotonous, equally devoid of grace, equally drear, dingy, and dismal? What touch of poetry, what gleam of romance, *can* enter into an existence passed in one of those brick and mortar dungeons? And even if we ascend higher in the social scale, we seldom meet with 'houses' which indicate any culture or aspiration on the part of their occupants. We find ostentation, perhaps luxury, and, it may be, a certain amount of coarse comfort; we note the evidences of a considerable expenditure of money; but seldom

of any expenditure of thought and feeling. Such carpets, such curtains, such mirrors, such couches, such chairs—one can fancy that the Genius of Taste regards them with pity, heaves a sigh of mingled compassion and despair, and hastily flies from the miserable scene! People who inhabit amidst these signs and memorials of barbarism must necessarily grow barbarous themselves. Any sympathies with better things, any yearnings after a higher ideal, which may have fluttered within their souls, must inevitably perish, oppressed.

The 'Art at Home' movement, of recent origin, has therefore much to recommend it, though it be carried in not a few instances to a ridiculous excess. There is room for improvement in the decoration and furnishing of our homes; though, on the other hand, we need not convert them into museums, or decorate our sitting-rooms with heterogeneous articles, until they assume the appearance of Wardour Street curiosity shops. The younger members of a family may find in this direction a field for the exercise of their taste and the occupation of their leisure. I do not propose that they should turn cabinet-makers or upholsterers; but they can employ deft and dexterous figures in embellishing their bedrooms or their boudoirs with evidences of refinement and 'things of beauty;' and they may, at a small expense—for the costly is not always the artistic—secure for their homes a general air of grace, elegance, and simplicity.

I think it cannot be denied that, after all the reservations are made which a rigid criticism will suggest, that the domestication of Art (if I may be allowed the phrase), to which I have referred, has already had a good effect upon the decorative arrangements of our houses; but I still question whether at the present day it is not being developed to an almost grotesque extreme; or, rather, whether a barbarous reaction is not taking place under the cover of this supposed artistic development. It does not seem necessary or desirable to go to Japan or China for the designs and devices with which to embellish an English drawing-room! In many of the recent innovations the ungenial character of our climate has been wholly overlooked, and arrangements adopted which, admirable enough under the warm blue sky of the East, are sadly out of place in our misty and dirty atmosphere. One leading principle of the new art-revival I take to be, revolution; that is, we must abolish everything which has hitherto prevailed, and

'go in' for novelty. The result very often is, that our living-rooms are turned into museums, into cabinets of curiosities, where no one thing is like any other thing; where Japanese tapestry hangs in juxtaposition to Greek vases, and Chelsea china reposes on a Mediæval sideboard. The old English idea of 'comfort' is banished in favour of a vulgar imitativeness euphemistically designated Art in the House. Marble mantelpieces are disguised with velvet hangings; the rich gold frames of the mirrors which helped to light up our apartments in the dark days of winter are set aside in favour of 'velvet-bands,' which rapidly grow dull and dusty; the warm soft carpet which hushed the noisy footfall, must give place to a cold glittering parquet, covered with geometrical figures. Why the old style should be so hopelessly vulgar and the new so ineffably artistic does not appear; nor does any *real* superiority on the part of the latter exist, except, indeed, in the imagination of the decorators who profit by the caprices of fashion.

In the leading ladies' newspaper I read as follows: 'Japanese fabrics are much in favour at the present moment.' Well, in what their attractions consist I for one am unable to comprehend; but that they are artistic, as the old artists understood art, I venture to deny. Some ladies, it appears, adorn the walls of their drawing-rooms with these materials. A 'good effect' was produced in a drawing-room of the day by a dado being formed of Japanese tapestry placed in a narrow oak bead frame, and reaching about three feet in height from the floor, extending around the whole room. It is now 'quite a feature' to ornament the panels of the drawing-room doors with pictures painted for the purpose, and let in under glass, so that the door presents a level surface, the panels being thus filled up; or the panels of the doors are painted with floral designs, and the beadings are painted black, red, blue, or gold, to harmonise with the style of decoration. 'Some ladies make use of both drawing-room doors as occasion serves, according as in which room (*sic*) they may be sitting; others make a point of making use of the back drawing-room door only, save at receptions or large afternoon teas; and, when not used, the panels of the front drawing-room door giving on the landing are sometimes filled in with plate-glass; and we have seen shelves covered with velvet placed across these panels to hold china ornaments, the glass forming the background. Some adopt the plan of



placing a shelf for china ornaments and jars at the *top* of the drawing-room door *inside* the room'—where any artistic excellence they possess cannot possibly be appreciated! 'Beakers and handsome jars of every description of china are placed upon massive bog oak brackets at a considerable height on the walls, *so that the jars are but a few inches from the cornice of the ceiling.*' Practically, they might as well be out of sight altogether! 'The much sought for blue china jars on red brackets have a good effect.' Have they? The contrast is hardly artistic! 'The supports of the mantelpieces are often panelled in the same way as the doors, and some even grace the shutters of the windows and the walls on either side of the pier-glasses with floral designs, interspersed with veils or arabesques.' In fact, there is no limit to the multiplication of ornament, however incongruous it may be, or however inappropriate.

No one doubts that the old Georgian style of furnishing and decorating a house was far from satisfying the 'æsthetic' taste, but I am not convinced that the new Victorian is a whit more genuinely artistic. It is well to enrich our living rooms with 'things of beauty'—with a graceful statue or a waving fern—and there was much to be done in this direction, so that the eye might be unconsciously educated into a love and appreciation of the graceful and harmonious. But this is not incompatible with the retention of the convenience and comfort that have so long been associated with the ideal English home; nor does it call for that absolute clearance of even the best features of the 'old order,' which is insisted upon by the fanatic apostles of the 'Art in the House' movement—those enthusiasts who carry their æsthetics into coal-scuttles, and whose highest conception of an artistic drawing-room is that of an 'old curiosity-shop,' hung about with shelves and brackets, and loaded with china jars!

What egregious nonsense some of these people write may be inferred from the following specimens which I select from a book not wholly deficient in useful hints, but rendered ridiculous by its affectations and insincerities:

'The old flowery carpet, bravely discarded, will form an excellent lining for a simpler substitute more gracefully gay, which might be made up to a square or oblong, or to suit the shape of the room. The new carpet, surrounded by a thick woollen fringe matching prevailing colours, will form a pleasing ground-

work on which *one old Eastern rug will work wonders of richness*. The formed judgment which discreetly chose the carpet would find real relish and enjoyment in the beauty of the rug, to the better recovery of good taste and the enrichment and refinement of ideas, to be hereafter exhibited to the benefit of future floors and carpets.'

'Looking-glass is not in itself a beautiful object, and in large masses is even unpleasant; it should always have some prettiness to multiply, for then it becomes reasonable and acceptable. This accounts fairly for our total objection to a lofty mirror, the greater part of which reflects nothing but the ceiling and upper walls, where usually there is blank space.' But if the wall be covered with a warm soft paper, carefully chosen, or richly lighted up with a spot of colour in the form of a well-painted landscape, the lofty mirror will have something reasonable and acceptable to reflect; and in any case it serves to concentrate and reflect whatever light is admitted into the room.

'To guard the hearth we have an old brass fender, which by its beautiful golden colour and delicate workmanship must and will give pleasure, be it in winter by firelight, or in summer by sunlight. Such fenders must now be sought for seriously (!), and when found, purchased as a kind of investment; their solid and conscientious make will stand much doing up, and each day they are becoming more rare and more expensive, because more in fashion.'

'If rooms be small, and ornaments and treasures varied, great scope is given to ingenuity and contrivance to gain a suitable resting-place for each art-object. It is excellent practice for the eager mind to have to battle with inconvenience, and to fight out a clear, if not perfect, path from the difficulties of trying to make the best of ugly proportions and coarse shapes; but there difficulties end, for colour is one's own to choose, and may cover a multitude of other sins.'

Sterne was of opinion that of all cants the cant of criticism was the most detestable, but the cant of æstheticism runs it a neck-and-neck race. The exaggeration employed is calculated, moreover, to defeat its object by exciting a sentiment of disgust in a sober and thoughtful mind. Such an one will probably say to itself that there is other and better work to be done in life than choosing Persian carpets and Japanese tapestries,



constructing elaborate overmantels, and heaping shelves with Algerian flower-pots and Chinese fans. 'Ugly proportions' and 'coarse shapes' are bad ; but there are many things much worse, against which it is still more decidedly one's duty to do battle. Thus reasoning, one may be tempted to underrate that law of beauty which should govern our surroundings as well as our actions, and to think that ugly proportions and coarse shapes are preferable to æsthetic jargon and pseudo-artistic fanaticism.

I confess, with Lady Barker, I like a room to look as if it were inhabited, which your æsthetically-furnished and artistically-decorated room never does. I like home to have its bits of grace and beauty, but still to look homely. Who on earth would set up his Lares and Penates in apartments decorated with portières and étagères, serious brackets, thoughtfully-designed overmantels, curtained doorways, glazed windows, and all the other fids and fads of the new school? One would be tempted to think one's self a stranger in an auction-room, and would be constantly looking round for a catalogue to price the different wares. Let there be refinement and grace, on every side the evidences of a cultivated taste ; but I submit that refinement and grace are not studied by the present system of art-decoration, with its restlessness, its eccentricity, and its exaggeration.

Ascending from the drawing-room to the bedroom, we demand as the essential conditions of successful treatment ample light and adequate ventilation ; that there must be due provision for warmth in winter, and for comfort all the year round. The eye must also be studied, and a simple but graceful treatment adopted of every detail. The purest art is, I think, the most simple, and an artistic bedroom may be contrived at a very small expenditure, and without having recourse to any of the crotchets of our æsthetic friends. You may cover your walls with a pretty paper—say, rose-buds spotted on a white ground—or drape them with chintz, or muslin. Your windows may be curtained with any soft, light material. Your furniture will be chosen for its simplicity and elegance ; and a corner may be fitted up as a boudoir, with a couch and writing-table, and partly curtained off from the rest of the room. Do not use gas if you can help it : what is superior to the soft equal radiance of a good oil-lamp or of wax-tapers? A hanging shelf

will support a row of your favourite books. A carved bracket or two will enable you to gratify yourself with a fern or a statuette. A good picture—a water-colour *par préférence*—and an oval mirror will complete your decorations. Here are the materials for making up a charming little bedroom—a nest of peace and beauty, in which you may enjoy pleasant dreams and pleasanter waking thoughts—a sanctuary to which you will retire, with your purer self, from the toil and moil of the work-day world.

Lady Barker sketches what seems to me as pretty a bedroom as youth and beauty can desire. ‘I know,’ she says, ‘a rural bedroom with a paper representing a trellis and Noisette roses climbing over it; the carpet is shades of green without any pattern, and has only a narrow border of Noisette roses; the bouquets, powdered on the chintzes, match, and outside the window a spreading bush of the same dear old-fashioned rose blooms three parts of the year. That is a bower indeed, as well as a bedroom. Noisette roses, and rose-buds half-smothered in leaves, have been painted by the skilful fingers of the owner of this room, on the door-handles and the tiles of the fire-place, as well as embroidered on the white quilt and the green cover of the writing-table. But then I acknowledge it is an exceptionally pretty room to begin with, for the dressing-table stands in a deep bay-window, to which you ascend by a couple of steps. Belinda herself could not have desired a fairer shrine whereat to worship her own beauty.’

Contrast with this picture the ideal one of the old bedroom at Hamley, which occurs in Mrs. Gaskell’s charming ‘Wives and Daughters.’ ‘All the furniture in the room was as old-fashioned and as well-preserved as it could be. The chintz curtains were Indian calico of the last century—the colours almost washed out, but the stuff itself exquisitely clean. There was a little strip of bedside carpeting; but the wooden flooring, thus liberally displayed, was of finely-grained oak, so firmly joined, plank to plank, that no grain of dust could make its way into the interstices. There were none of the luxuries of modern days: no writing-table, or sofa, or pier-glass. In one corner of the walls was a bracket, holding an Indian jar filled with pot-pourri; and that and the climbing honeysuckle outside the open window scented the room more exquisitely than any toilette perfumes.’

In this connection it is proper that I should say a few words about the dining-room. The canons of taste at which I have already hinted must also come into general application here ; and the leading ‘notes’ or ‘marks’ of the apartment should be simplicity, refinement, comfort. But I fail to see why the room in which we dine should be so strangely ordered as an altogether separate and exclusive room ; why its furniture must possess so peculiar and individual a character. Who does not know the dining-room *en règle* ? The telescopic table, portentously heavy and even cumbrous ; the massive sideboard, which appals by its gaunt solidity ; the substantial chairs, to lift which is an exercise in gymnastics ; the family portraits, or the game and fruit pieces, glaring out of huge gilded frames on the crimson flock-papered walls ; the sombre red curtains hanging idly against the windows : who is not familiar with these traditional horrors, that lend to the art of dining a barbarous and cannibalistic character ? You remember Sidney Smith’s jesting remark to the Bishop of New Zealand about ‘cold missionary on the sideboard ?’ It is just the dish that would become so grim an article of furniture ; and if Narcissa had proved herself worthy of the poet’s satire, and ‘for a wash had gladly stewed a child,’ the said viand might suitably have figured on an English dining-table ! There is no reason why ‘the chief meal of the day’ should not be taken in any room, nor why the room appropriated to the purpose of refreshment should not be a bright and radiant one. The old style implied large dinner-parties, for whom special accommodation must be provided—an ‘hospitable board,’ at which four-and-twenty guests might find places. But no wise host or hostess—except at official dinners—now asks twenty-five unhappy creatures at one time ; he has more compassion for them and for himself. When men and women sat at dinner for the whole of a long evening, it was natural enough that table and sideboard should be solidly constructed. Horace Walpole tells of a dinner which contrasts vividly enough with the moderate ‘prandial repasts’ of the present day. ‘I was to dine at Northumberland House,’ he says, ‘and came there a little after four. There I found the countess, Lady Betty Mackinsy, Lady Stratford, my Lady Finlater—who was never out of Scotland before—a tall lad of fifteen, her son, Lord Drogheda, and Mr. Worsley. At five arrived Mr. Mitchell, who said the Lords had commenced

to read the Poor Bill, which would take, at least, two hours, and, perhaps, would debate it afterwards. We concluded dinner would be called for, it not being very preceded for ladies to wait for gentlemen. No such thing! Six o'clock came—seven o'clock came—our coaches came! Well, we sent them away; and excuses were, we were engaged. Still, the countess's heart did not relent, nor uttered a syllable of apology. We wore out the wind and the weather, the opera and the play, Mrs. Comely's and Almack's, and every topic that would do in a formal circle. We hinted, represented—in vain. The clock struck eight. My lady, at last, said she would go and order dinner; but it was a good half-hour before it appeared. We then sat down to a table of fourteen covers; but, instead of substantials, there was nothing but a profusion of plates, striped red, green, and yellow—gilt plate, blacks, and uniforms. My Lady Finlater, who never saw these embroidered dinners, nor dined after three, was famished. The first course stayed as long as possible, in hopes of the Lords; so did the second. The dessert at last arrived, and the middle dish was actually set on, when Lord Finlater and Mr. Mackay arrived! Would you believe it?—the dessert was remanded, and the whole first course brought back again! Stay—I have not done! Just as this second first course had done its duty, Lord Northumberland, Lord Stratford, and Mackinsy came in, and the whole began a third time. Then the second course, and the dessert! I thought we should have dropped from our chairs with fatigue and fumes. When the clock struck eleven, we were asked to return to the drawing-room, and take tea and coffee; but I said I was engaged to supper, and came home to bed.'

We have improved on the manners, if not on the morals, of our eighteenth century forefathers; and it is well that we should also improve on their dining-room arrangements. We want nothing more than a room in which we and our guests (fit but few!) may dine delicately, sip our wine moderately, and talk wisely. Such a room should have about it something of the charm and grace wherewith we invest our drawing-rooms. Nor is it intended primarily for the reception of guests; it is there that, every day, we and our family must pass several hours. Why, then, should it not be tricked out lightsomely, and graced with the equipment necessary to our domestic comfort?

With one brief caution we quit this part of our subject. Study refinement and comfort, *but study economy also*. Do not let your house be too big for your income; do not fill it with sumptuous furniture, the payment of which may cripple you for years. Many young married couples begin housekeeping on too grand a scale; forgetting that a large house means a large household—a large annual expenditure upon appearances—a large outlay for which they realise no return. Their circle of acquaintances will be in proportion; and a large circle of acquaintances entails a continual drain upon the young couple's resources, when, as a rule, these are least able to bear it. At the outset go to sea in a small but well-found barque; you can sail a three-master when you have gained experience and can command the necessary capital.

The process of home culture must be worked out in the country as well as in town, though it will necessarily assume a different character. The facilities for making home happy—which is the object of home culture—are as many there as elsewhere, though they are not the same. It is amusing to hear some people talk of the annual migration to the country as if it were a sad and lamentable event; as if their departure from the joys of town was a thing to weep over, like the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the delightful bowers and glades of Eden:

‘They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld  
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat, . . .  
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon . . .’

as, let us hope, our urban fanatics will do when experience has revealed to them the pleasures of a rural life. For my own part, I firmly believe, with Cowper, that ‘God made the country, and man made the town,’ if, indeed, in the making of the latter a certain Power and Presence of grisly repute were not very intimately concerned. It is to me always a moment of intense intellectual and moral pleasure when I turn my back upon the great city, with its hurrying crowds, its noisy streets, its worship of Mammon, its greed, its cares, its petty ambitions, its barrenness, and bend my steps towards fresh woods and pastures new; towards the cool shadows of the leafy woods, and the green hedgerows, and the sparkle of silver streams in the meadows, and the glow of golden harvests upon the fertile plains, and the gleam of white cottages among the purple



treasures of the orchard. No doubt the country, like the town, has its cares and sorrows, its greed and ambition; but they seem to assume a less repulsive shape, and are not forced so prominently upon your notice. You may give yourself up to the song of birds and streams, and heed them not—be ignorant even of their existence. Let them alone; cast them behind you utterly, and go forth into the odorous recesses of the woodland, where the blackbird is piping out his very soul in joy; or climb the green hilltop, and watch the waves of light and shade as they roll over the tremulous blades of the young green corn; or linger on the pleasant lea, where the colt watches your approach with gentle, steadfast eye, to scamper away with a toss of the free young head when you approach too near; or pace to and fro the ‘ribbèd sand,’ and take into your heart that mighty music of the sea which means so much that can never be translated into words. When you know all that a country life puts within your reach, all the sights and sounds of beauty and sweetness which it makes yours, all the graceful and glorious and wonderful images and fancies with which it will fill your mind, I think you will cease to speak of it as dull, or to look forward to it with the apprehension of one who waits his exile from his native land.

I like at times—and I trust the custom is not distasteful to my readers—to embellish my prose with the charms of poetry, and draw upon the stores of our sweet singers for illustrations of the subject with which I am led to deal. And I remember a passage in William Browne’s ‘*Britannia’s Pastorals*’—a poem, or series of poems, pregnant with the breath of rural life—which will find here an appropriate niche. It is a country picture which he sketches with sweet simplicity, and I ask you to contrast it with those ‘*afternoon teas*’ and ‘*at homes*’ which absorb so much of your attention and consume (to little purpose!) so much of your energy:

‘ . . . Here, the curious cutting of a hedge,  
 There, in a pond, the trimming of the sedge;  
 Here the fine setting of well shaded trees,  
 The walks there mounting up by small degrees,  
 The gravel and the green so equal lie,  
 It, with the rest, draws on your lingering eye;  
 Here the sweet smells that do perfume the air,  
 Arising from the infinite repair  
 Of odoriferous buds and herbs of price—  
 As if it were another Paradise—

So please the smelling sense, that you are fain  
Where last you walked to turn and walk again.'

No doubt of it! Once taste those fresh and pure enjoyments, and you will crave for more of them; the wider grows your knowledge, the more serene will be your satisfaction. Such pleasures never pall upon the appetite, because there is always in them a something which you have never before discovered.

'There the small birds with their harmonious notes  
Sing to a spring that smileth as she floats. . . .'

Is not that a lovely line? Observe its pleasant alliterative melody.

'For in her face a many dimples show  
And often skips as she did dancing go . . .  
This with no small delight retains your ear,  
*And makes you think none blest but who live there. . . .*

Not even the denizens of Tyburnia or Belgravia, not even the ladies and cavaliers who, in the hot summer afternoons, perform the penance of fashion in the sultry length and breadth of Rotten Row!

'There in another place the fruits that be  
In gallant clusters decking each good tree,  
Invite your hand to nip them from the stem,  
And, liking one, taste every sort of them:  
Then to the arbours walk, then to the bowers,  
Thence to the walks again, thence to the flowers,  
Then to the birds, and to the clear spring thence,  
Now pleasing one, and then another sense.'

Eye and ear, heart, soul and brain, are alike entertained, refreshed and invigorated by the sights and sounds with which a country life surrounds us. It is in rural retirement that we can think most clearly, that we can form the wisest resolves, decide upon the loftiest purposes, and cherish the holiest affections. No man ever saw more of the picturesque side of town life than Sir Walter Raleigh, who shone in Elizabeth's court among the most brilliant of her favourites—soldier and statesman and courtier—and yet, from the courtly state and pageantry that glittered around him, he turned a wistful eye towards the sweet Eden-like scenes of the country, with their promise of tranquillity and the fulness of their innocent and enduring

pleasures. How from his heart arises the almost passionate benediction :—

‘Blest silent groves ! O may ye be  
For ever Mirth’s best nursery !

May pure contents  
For ever pitch their tents

Upon these downs, these meads, these rocks, these mountains,  
And Peace still slumber by these purling fountains !’

In country life the study of Nature will, of course, be a principal source of enjoyment. There is so much to be seen and understood—from the daisy that closes its pink-tipped petals in the gloaming, to the character and axis of the strata that compose the bulk of yonder hill. Every tree has its individuality, every flower has something rare and beautiful in its structure. You cannot pass a hedgerow which is not rich in points of interest ; not a stream swirls across the meadows without a meaning in its music. The croft, the coppice, the meadow, the cornfield—all offer their abundant materials to the student. Insect life is an inexhaustible mine of wonders ; or the birds will claim your closest and most intelligent attention. The colour and outline of the landscape will also repay your investigation, and you will be charmed by its beauty or awe-stricken by its sublimity. Perhaps it is such a scene as the forest-land still, in some parts of the country, presents to the gratified eye, where the tall trees spread for miles their contiguity of shade, with stalwart trunks and gnarled boughs that have withstood the storms of centuries. There the squirrels make merry in the oaks, and the deer rove in the ferny glades. Ah, what haunts for poets ! What silver-shining brooks carry the sunshine into cool sylvan bowers ! What sloping grassy banks smile with convolvulus and pimpernel ! Or it may be a scene on the threshold of the haunted region of Devonshire—a valley echoing with the sullen voice of the deep, dark river, and lifting up huge ruddy tors into the clear thin air. Or it may be the bright orchard-scenes of Hereford and Worcester, all rich in bloom and fragrance ; or the fairy dales of Derbyshire ; or the purple wolds of Yorkshire ; or the fens of Anglia, with their eerie colouring ; or the wooded ridges of Staffordshire ; or the beautiful valleys and hills of Lancashire ; or the broad, undulating, grassy downs of Sussex. You need not go far afield to find and partake of these delights. The railway and the factory have encroached upon old England,

but still, at this very day, the fresh green country runs up to the immediate borders of our large towns. From London, a short ride takes you to the charming landscapes among the northern hills, or to the leafy villages that line the valley of the upper Thames, or to the sweet nooks and corners of Kent and Surrey. Within three or four miles of Manchester, of Leeds, of Hull, of Bristol, of Birmingham, you may revel in all that is most characteristic of country life. To many persons the name of Nottingham would suggest no grateful idea, and yet its neighbourhood has much to delight and inspire an artist. Those who know Bramcote, and Attenborough, and Newstead, and Birkland, and Harlowe Wood will wonder that so few singers have celebrated their charms, and will own that country life may there be studied under its most picturesque aspects. William Howitt has written very graphically and lovingly of a forest-bit—near Oxtou—a fragment of ballad-haunted Sherwood which, I think, might find acceptance even with the most inveterate of anti-bucolics. You get your first glimpse of its picturesque beauty at a little bridge which crosses a clear and rapid trout-stream, and looking from thence, you throw your gaze into a long valley filled with sedges, glancing in the distance with the light of waters. Below you the stream widens into a little lake, dimpling round a grassy islet, and in this lakelet the water-hens are busy, darting ever and anon into the masses of tall hassocky sedge which cluster about its banks. Further down, the view is bounded by cool woods and green copses; but upward the valley stretches like a cantle cut out of Paradise, with the wild moorland on the right and pastoral fields on the left.

Cross the heathy uplands and you find yourself surrounded by sights of beauty, by sweet odours, and musical sounds. You come at length to a shepherd's hut, built up of heath and turf, which furnishes a convenient resting-place. It seems a favourite resort of the birds, for we are no sooner seated than to the woodland just below it come a host of feathered visitors; yellow-hammers, rosy-breasted gorse-linnets, pied wagtails, and graceful yellow wagtails, whinchats of the richest colours, titlarks, and luscious wheatears, all mingling their songs and cries in one various chorus. Beautiful is it to see them, thinking themselves unseen, and disporting in unrestrained freedom. Into the lucid water they wade up to the very necks, and twitter,

and flutter, and chirp, and break into joyous song; while some stand perfectly still, enjoying the cool liquid as it streams through their feathers, and others dip, and dive, and sprinkle it over their feathers, and yield themselves up to an ecstasy of delight which you cannot witness without sympathy. Many fly away, but their places are immediately filled by new-comers. Here have we a peep into the life of these little lowly creatures which is rarely attained, and for the rareness of which we have to thank our tyranny.

But we proceed, and in a few moments come upon the margin of a mere which reminds us of that lonely lake into which Sir Bedivere, at King Arthur's bidding, flung the sword Excalibur. Out of it the wild fowl rise in numbers, and on clanging wings fly to more remote waters; and when they are gone we become aware of little voices which have been drowned in their louder ones. These are the cries of large flocks of ducklings, young teal, coots, and other 'aquatics,' which have been left behind, and now sail to and fro amongst the tall pillars of sedge, ever and anon emerging from beneath their drooping nests of leaves, with open beaks intent upon their insect-prey. Now comes the cuckoo with its cowering motion and leaden-hued plumage, and that quaint guttural note which listeners in general are too distant to hear, catching only its ordinary articulate chant, that 'minor third' whence it derives its name.

Here I must stop my pen. The reader's quick imagination will doubtlessly create the scene in all its varied details, or scenes as attractive, if dissimilar in character. To seek such scenes and study them, and master all their significance, is one of the prime delights of country life.

Then there are the social aspects, customs, and observances of country life demanding our investigation. In many parts of the country harvest-home lingers still, and the village bells ring out their merriest chime as the loaded wains pass, creaking and groaning, into the farmer's yard. It is sometimes said that much of the old picturesqueness has been destroyed by the introduction of machinery, and that the mower, the reaper, and the gleaner are being rapidly improved off the face of rural England. But is there nothing picturesque in the machinery itself? in the swift action of the reaping machine and the automatic precision of the steam-mower as it cuts and lays down the hay in



regular swathes? Is there nothing in them regarded as evidences of the successful application of human ingenuity, and of the adaptation of the motive power of the steam-engine to purposes undreamed of by its inventors? Plough Monday is no longer celebrated, or its celebration is confined to the children; but the Foresters, or the Gardeners, or the local Friendly Society have their annual feast and holiday, which calls into requisition all the resources of the village.

By five o'clock in the morning the band musters in the village street and goes round to the neighbouring villages and farmhouses to summon forth the revellers. In this procession the drum may be said to take the lead; he makes more noise and drinks more beer than any of the other performers. About dinner-time, or between twelve and one o'clock, the band usually returns to the centre and headquarters of festivity, followed by the members of the club in gala attire—with a great display of ribbons, rosettes, mysterious insignia, and banners covered with quaint devices; and their wives, children, and sweethearts proud of the appearance of Tom and Ned and Giles. After a hearty appreciation of the beer and solid viands provided by mine host of the 'Red Lion' or 'Ring of Bells,' the villagers apply themselves to such sad amusements as befit the grave English temperament, while the musicians go off to play in front of the principal houses—the parsonage, the hall, the banker's—and levy contributions towards the expenses of the day. In the evening these indefatigable instrumentalists assemble in the club-room of the public-house, and then 'the ball begins.' That such arduous labours involve the absorption of abnormal quantities of beer will easily be understood, and on such an occasion may perhaps, by easy moralists, be excused. 'Dancing is kept up with great spirit' till two or three o'clock in the morning. The favourite measures used to be country dances, but the quadrille and the polka are now exceedingly popular.

Meantime the open space in front of the inn has become crowded with shows and booths, which do 'a roaring trade' among the yokels, their wives, children, and sweethearts;—shooting-galleries, swings, merry-go-round-about, and exhibitions of 'the fat woman,' or 'the Norfolk giant,' with glittering stalls for the sale of gingerbread, nuts, and gilded cakes—toothsome but indigestible. At last the crowd begins to thin off; the inn closes its shutters and its doors; the musicians cease,

from exhaustion and much beer, and in twos and threes the weary revellers betake themselves to their respective homes, some engaged in friendly chat that ever and anon breaks out into ardent professions of personal esteem, and others startling the silence of the night with snatches of half-tipsy song. Be it said that the quieter and more respectable villagers have retired from the revelry long before, and two-thirds of the village are already fast asleep.

In some places a short service at the parish church begins the day, and the vicar himself makes his appearance at 'the dinner.' An air of decorum is thus thrown over the proceedings which has a markedly salutary effect. One of the great evils of the 'new order' of things in country life is the extent to which the upper classes are separating themselves from the amusements of the lower, to the grave injury of both; this separation encouraging a belief that their interests are hostile, and inciting in the minds of the lower a sentiment of antagonism against their masters and employers which, I fear, will yet produce evil fruit.

The 'statty' or statute fair, for the half-yearly hiring of farm servants, is still kept up in many parts of the country; it would be well if it were everywhere abolished. On these occasions the young men and women of the district gather at the appointed centre, and stand in the market-place for hire, the special service which they profess being indicated by a badge; thus, the herds and hinds assume a bunch of wool, the would-be carter twists a piece of whipcord in his cap, and the aspirant for a housemaid's place adorns her bonnet with a sprig of broom. When engaged, both sexes pin a knot of bright-coloured ribbons on breast or shoulder, like so many recruits for her Majesty's military forces. After the business of the day is over, servants and employers alike proceed to 'enjoy themselves,' and sometimes the enjoyment takes a very questionable shape indeed. The days of the 'statty' are numbered, but most of the servants like it because it secures them a day's 'outing,' and farmers because it gives them an opportunity of testing and comparing a good many applicants before they make their final choice.

Any survey of country life would be incomplete which did not include the 'habits and customs' of the farmers, who still form an important class of our population, and wield a considerable influence. A pleasant essayist, writing some thirteen

years ago, speaks of the chief events which give variety to the tenant-farmer's life as the weekly market, the agricultural meeting, and the visitation; and to this day they are the three great events in the agriculturist's calendar. So far as the markets are concerned, we cannot shut our eyes to the great changes which have taken place. The farmer no longer rises before five, and straddles his rough cob, or installs himself in his old gig, and jogs away at the rate of six miles an hour to reach the market-place at seven. He does not think of moving until about eleven or twelve, and then he mounts a smartly got-up dog-cart, or, wonder of wonders! takes a second or first-class ticket at the railway-station, and travels by train to the rendezvous. At two o'clock he sits down to the market-dinner, a luxurious repast of fish and game and poultry, 'washed down' by sherry, claret, aye, and champagne. Here he settles his engagements for the ensuing week, discusses the new manures or the latest improvement in machinery; gives and accepts invitations to shoot and course and sup; grumbles at American competition, and compares meteorological notes. For the English farmer of the present day is a very different person from the farmer of 1840 or even 1860. The growth of the public mind has not been limited to the manufacturing and commercial districts. Successive bad seasons, foreign competition, and other causes, have aroused the farmer from the supposed normal apathy of bucolicism, and he is now a quick, active, intelligent man of business, taking a warm interest in politics, shrewdly forecasting the various circumstances and conditions that may affect his special interests, and studying the application of science to the cultivation of the soil. In most parts of England he is not to be distinguished outwardly from the well-to-do trader or manufacturer; the top-boots have vanished, and the leather breeches, and the flowered waistcoat. Greatest change of all, he is ceasing to regard his interests as necessarily identical with those of his landlord, and is beginning to look after his own as something distinct from those of the latter. Whilst counting amongst the most loyal of subjects, he claims a perfect independence of thought, action, and partizanship, whether in political or ecclesiastical matters. The members of his class who have gained an entrance into the House of Commons are to be found distributed, but not quite equally, amongst the Conservative and the Liberal benches.

It is curious to read the following passage, which was written in 1867, and to contrast it with the present state of things. A complete, if gradual and almost silent, revolution has been worked.

‘At the agricultural meeting the farmer goes to hear his county member much in the same spirit in which Hannibal listened to the lecturer. This critical mood, however, extends only to the nature of wurzels, the quality of tiles, and the prospects of wool and corn. When politics are introduced, he listens to the orator, not, indeed, with that deferential faith or keen party spirit which he once possessed, but with curiosity, as he might listen to a traveller who had just returned from foreign countries. In matters of pure politics the farmer of the present day is somewhat of a Gallio. His moral system has never recovered from the shock which it experienced in 1846; and even on questions that more intimately concern himself he exhibits but a languid interest. The malt-tax rouses him to only an ephemeral excitement; he has but little faith in those that promise its repeal, and if he nourishes any strong opinions about anything, they are usually of such a nature that he thinks it better to keep them to himself. He now accordingly sits down at the town-hall, or the corn-exchange, or the Plantagenet Arms, or wherever the dinner may be held, prepared to hear a political speech as a matter of course, but not caring very much about it. Like the northern farmer and his clergyman, so with the farmer and his member. He supposes he says what he is obliged to say, and he listens and takes his leave.’

But he no longer listens: he speaks for himself; he has dared to raise his voice against privileges and monopolies which seemed to be perpetuated to his own disadvantage; and he has succeeded in making so many alterations, both in himself and the conditions and circumstances of his life, that it is useless to deny that the traditional British farmer, the farmer of our caricaturists and novelists, is as extinct as the traditional country squire; and his successor is, as I have said, a wholly different personage—much more intelligent, far less prejudiced, and, to my mind, much more respectable and interesting.

The essayist I have quoted, ascending from the farmers to the clergy and gentry, asserts that the country life of the latter has not much altered in its essence. They keep, perhaps, rather later hours; some of them drink claret, and not so many



clergymen hunt. I am unable to agree with him. I think the gentry have felt the influence of that spirit of change which has passed over the whole country and so largely modified its social conditions. Their ranks have been recruited in great numbers from the more prosperous of our merchants and manufacturers, who have infected the whole order with their activity, restlessness, and passion for liberal expenditure. The country gentry differ little, if at all, from the town gentry; as a matter of fact, perhaps, they are identical, the town gentry becoming country gentry for the autumn and winter months, and the country gentry migrating to town for 'the season.' As a necessary consequence, the 'fashions' of the metropolis have been adopted into country life, with only such relaxations as the indulgence in a large amount of open-air pastime has made desirable. There are 'afternoon teas' in our country as well as our town houses; and the etiquette that governs 'calls' and 'receptions' in London prevails at Pedlington Parva. Our rural readers are able to judge for themselves how much of truth is contained in the following remarks:—

'The country dinner-party still survives in all its ancient dignity, and has certainly now become one of the most incomprehensible modes of giving and receiving pleasure which mankind have yet invented. A man comes in tired from hunting or shooting, or from working in his parish, at five o'clock; and instead of refreshing himself with all those comforts which no man can find out of his own house, he is hurried upstairs to dress, is dragged down shivering to the hall-door, and bundled into a damp carriage, to be jostled some eight or ten miles across country, there to swallow salt soup, clammy cutlets, and cheap claret at a neighbour's house, in deference to conventions from which the whole spirit has departed. In former days, when the dinner was at half-past five or six, when the men did really and seriously drink port wine together for a couple of hours, and when a round game and a rubber were permitted to carry on the evening till eleven or twelve o'clock, the arrival of the carriages being preceded by 'a tray'—then, indeed, there was some meaning in a country dinner-party. People met together to do something which they could not do so well in any other way. The conversation might not be metaphysical, the scandal might not be metropolitan; but the port wine, the whist, and the Pope Joan, were sound realities



on which people looked back with satisfaction, as on so many more good things got out of life and stored away beyond the reach of fortune. But the dinner at seven, the coffee after two glasses, tea and photographs at half-past nine, and the carriages at the door at ten—these things are an unsubstantial pageant.’

The recognised amusements of country life are necessarily out-of-door amusements; such as riding, driving, boating, swimming, hunting, archery, skating, shooting. Upon such etiquette as connects itself with one or two of these, I shall have to offer some hints hereafter. Generally speaking, these, and all other amusements which enter into our social life, should be governed by the one great principle of unselfishness, which lies at the bottom of true courtesy. I think it will be forgiven to a man if his shooting-jacket be of an obsolete cut, or his toxophilite equipment incomplete in some of its details, if he carry this principle into his conduct, and do unto his companions as he would have them do unto himself. Where men do congregate, or where men and women assemble together, or women alone, harmonious relations can be preserved only by the maintenance of a general spirit of good-humour, of that equable temper which gives and takes, of that generosity which respects the *wishes* as well as the *rights* of others. ‘Be just and fear not’ is an excellent maxim; but in society, ‘Be generous and assert not’ is a better. Etiquette may be regarded as a protest by society against individual assertion, and, at the same time, as the code of rules by which it endeavours to repress or guard against that assertion. Everybody who has formed part of a shooting or boating party, into which a self-asserting individual has intruded himself, knows how that one man is able to destroy the comfort of all the others. A fly on a wheel, it is true, does no harm, and we laugh at the silly pride which places it there; but a fly in your eye is excessively disagreeable and irritating, though it is no bigger there than on the wheel. We are unable, therefore, to laugh at self-assertion, because, insignificant as it is in itself, it is a source of annoyance and even pain.

Country life offers such opportunities for the cultivation of one very elegant amusement, as town life, under the most favourable conditions, cannot bring within our reach: I refer to gardening. In towns our gardens wear always an artificial air, and exact of us sacrifices which they cannot to any extent

repay. But in the country, we can convert them into 'Eden bowers' with very small labour, when that labour is directed by skill and intelligence; we can easily provide our homes with the grace and refinement which are inseparable from flowers. The exercise is healthy as it is enjoyable; it is open to both sexes; a lady can wield the rake and hoe, while the rougher work is relegated to masculine hands. In many, perhaps in most, families the care of the garden is left to a hired gardener; but this is a mistake, and is fatal to the wholesome entertainment which ought to be got out of it. It may have its flourishing shrubs, its bowers of glossy evergreens, its beds of blushing blossoms; but it is not the same thing as when cultivated by our own hands; it does not so closely engage our sympathies; we have no personal interest in it; it is only nominally ours—really and truly it is the gardener's. How different our feelings towards it when each flower has grown up under our personal supervision; when yonder rich mass of carnations was planted by ourselves; when that broad cluster of nemophila was sown by ourselves; when to our fancy is due that arrangement of alyssum and lobelia; when those fair gladioles have grown up under our eye; when we have laid out each bed and designed each path!

There are gardens and gardens: each one to his taste—Italian, Elizabethan, Queen Anne, Modern English—it is easy to say some words in defence of each. There may be terraces, fountains, and statues, with trim parterres and broad flights of steps; or there may be cool stretches of lawn under green boughs, striking promontory-wise into masses of shrubbery, and broken up by well-conceived groups of rock-work. It is not the style—not even the area—of the garden on which its beauty and pleasure depend, for I have seen cottage gardens which excelled in glow of colour and effectiveness of combination gardens laid out by scientific horticulturists. The truth is, a garden ought to exhibit the impress of the mind of its owner, and is successful only in proportion to its individuality of character. Its position ought to be studied: its relation to the surrounding landscape; the object it is intended to serve. Owing to a foolish and ignorant neglect of these considerations, three-fourths of our gardens are spoiled; they attain a uniformity of dulness, a monotony of imitativeness, which drive the beholder nearly mad. Each is as like the

other as perverted taste can make it ; the same style of flower-beds, the same kind of evergreens, the same accumulation of 'bedding-out plants,' the same miserable 'arrangement' of geometrical patterns, which look as if the owner had been endeavouring to work out Euclid's problems. I would rather see gardens less ambitious, and with more *soul* in them. I would rather see each plant and shrub and flower giving positive evidence of its owner's solicitude. To love a garden it must be your own ; must be your own creation : it is but a weak affection, after all, which we profess for other people's children.

That exercise is admittedly the healthiest which aims at the attainment of some amusing or interesting object. Such is gardening. We know what we are working for ; if the perspiration stand in beaded drops upon our brow, we know that all this labour is not without an aim or a reward. Every day brings us a fresh toil, but it also brings a new delight. The flower which yesterday was but a bud has now unfolded its shining petals ; the plant which, last night, showed but a tiny stem, this morning reveals the first sign of a green leaf. The gardener, like the actor, is brought face to face with the result of his exertions. He *sees* and *feels* Nature's approval of them in the bounty with which she heaps up around him her sure and beautiful gifts.

I confess that, like St. Aldegonde, I hate modern gardens. With Euphrosyne, I assert that one may like a mosaic pavement to look like a garden, but not a garden like a mosaic pavement. I delight in a garden from which one may gather a nosegay of fair and fragrant flowers ; a garden redolent of perfume and bright with colour ; a garden with leafy shades and ferny nooks, and beds of old-fashioned blossoms, rich in the associations of three or four hundred years. I think Corisande's garden was a sensible one.

'It was formed,' you may remember, 'on a gentle southern slope, with turfen terraces walled in on three sides, the fourth consisting of arches of golden yew. Here, in their season, flourished abundantly all those productions of nature which are now banished from our once delighted senses : huge bushes of honeysuckle, and bowers of sweet-pea and sweet-briar, and jessamine clustering over the walls, and gillyflowers scenting with their sweet breath the ancient bricks from which they

seemed to spring. There were banks of violets which the southern breeze always stirred, and mignonette filled every vacant nook.'

In such a garden one would never want 'materials for thought' or 'food for fancy.' The growth of a flower is in itself a subject on which one might think profitably for happy hours. The seed—then the issue of the green stalks from that earth-grave which is also a cradle—the lateral stems developing from the main stem—the spathe—the unfolding of the leaf—another, and yet another—the upward springing of the main stalk, like the motion of the soul towards the light—the appearance of the mystic bud—its enlargement, its development, by some subtle and undiscernible process, into the bright consummate flower. This phenomenon is a daily occurrence, and therefore we take little note of it; were it as rare as a volcanic eruption, how it would seize upon our wonder! 'Last spring,' says Leigh Hunt, in one of his charming essays, 'walking over some cultivated grounds, and seeing a multitude of green stalks peeping forth, we amused ourselves with likening them to the plumes and other headgear of fairies, and wondering what faces might ensue; and from this exercise of the fancy, we fell to considering how true, and not merely fanciful, those speculations were; what a perpetual reproduction of the marvellous was carried on by Nature; how utterly ignorant we were of the causes of the least and most disesteemed of the commonest vegetables; and what a quantity of life, and beauty, and mystery, and use, and enjoyment, was to be found in them, composed out of all sorts of elements, and shaped as if by the hands of fairies. What workmanship, with no apparent workman! What consummate elegance, though the result was to be nothing (as we call it) but a radish or an onion, and these were to be consumed, or thrown away by millions!'

Many such speculations will the garden awaken in a thoughtful mind, and thus the physical exercise of gardening may be accompanied by an intellectual exercise, which will help not a little to sweeten, refine, and elevate our country life. Everything in a garden, as elsewhere in this wonderful world, is a peg on which may be hung an idea, if we have only an idea to hang upon it.

An exquisite garden-picture occurs in Tennyson's poem of 'The Gardener's Daughter.' The poet is, I believe, himself

an amateur gardener of no small proficiency, and at Faringford, in the Isle of Wight, the garden attached to his picturesque residence was a sight to see. But here is the picture, which, as I transcribe it, flatters my senses with sweet odours and hints of colour in the golden sunshine :

‘A well worn pathway courted us  
To one green wicket in a privet hedge ;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Thro’ crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned ;  
And one warm gust, full fed with perfume, blew  
Beyond us, as we entered in the cool.  
The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
A cedar spread his dark green layers of shade.  
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily  
The twinkling laurel scattered silver lights.’

In such a garden it were bliss to live for ever, if that ‘ever’ were always summer-time ; and in such a garden one is apt to ask why should autumn come with its touches of decay, and winter with its frost of death ? Then comes the thought, however, that but for those we should never know the joy and happiness of the awakening of spring.

Do you recollect Miss Mitford’s garden ? She writes about it, in the enthusiastic terms of love, to her friend, the author of ‘Aurora Leigh’—Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

‘You would like it,’ she says ; ‘it is so pretty. One side (it is nearly an acre of show flowers) a high hedge of hawthorn, with giant trees rising above it beyond the hedge, whilst all down within the garden are clumps of matchless hollyhocks and splendid dahlias, the top of the garden being shut in by the old irregular cottage, with its dark brickwork covered with vines and roses, and its picturesque chimneys mingling with the bay-tree, again rising into its bright and shining cone, and two old pear-trees festooned with honeysuckle ; the bottom of the garden and the remaining side consisting of lower hedges melting into wooded uplands dotted with white cottages and patches of common. Nothing can well be imagined more beautiful than this little bit of ground is now. Huge masses of lupines (say fifty or sixty spiral spikes), some white, some lilac ; immense clumps of the marvelled Siberian larkspur, glittering like some enormous Chinese jar ; the white and azure blossoms of the variegated monkshood ; flags of all colours ; roses of every shade, some covering the house and



stables and overtopping the roofs, others mingling with tall apple-trees ; others again (especially the beautiful double Scotch rose), low but broad, standing in bright relief to the blues and purples ; and the Oriental poppy, like an orange-lamp (for it really seems to have light within it), shining amidst the deeper greens ; above all, the pyramid of geraniums, beautiful beyond all beauty, rising in front of our garden-room, whilst each corner is filled with the same beautiful flower, and the whole air perfumed by the delicious honeysuckle.'

I think that those of my readers who seriously endeavour to frame a garden on the pattern of Miss Mitford's will rejoice in the admirable opportunities it furnishes of mental and physical exercise, and find in it an aid, not less potent than delightful, to that home culture which makes home happiness.





## CHAPTER II.

### ABROAD.

'Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.'

*Shakespeare.*

' . . . . . 'Tis ever common,  
That men are merriest when they are from home.'

*Shakespeare.*

Society and its Duties—Horace Walpole upon Society—Its Observances must be Complied with—Visiting Cards—'Calls'—A few Words in Defence of the Custom—Ladies and Morning Calls—Anecdotes—An Amusing Mistake—Invitations, Form of—Replies, Form of—Receiving Guests; some Useful Advice—Qualifications of a Hostess—The late Lady Palmerston—A Perfect Host: the late Lord Lansdowne—The Ostentatious Host and Hostess—The Arrival of Guests; how they are to be Received—At a County Ball—Before Dinner: 'An Awful Pause'—Washington Irving on Genuine Hospitality—Visiting—Three Kinds, or Classes, of 'Calls'—Visits of Ceremony—Letters of Introduction—Entering a Drawing-room—Shaking Hands: a 'Fine Art'—The *Wrong Ways* of Shaking Hands—Leigh Hunt and Hand-Shaking—Visits of Sympathy—Calling on Married Couples—Calling on Families who have Sustained a Bereavement—General Calls—Etiquette for Host and Guest—How to Leave a Room—Introductions, how made, and when—Some General Reflections—Provincial Society—A Grand Party at Cranford, as Described by Mrs. Gaskell—Various kinds of Social Entertainments—Conversaziones, 'At Homes,' Receptions—The Etiquette attaching to Conversaziones—Public Conversaziones—Sir Walter Vivian's, in 'The Princess'—Afternoon Parties: General Remarks—'Five o'Clock Teas'—'Receptions'—How they may be made Successful—A Panegyric on Tact—Private Musical Parties—Private Theatricals—Amateur Theatricals in Literature—Miss Austen in 'Mansfield Park'—Miss Edgeworth in 'Patronage'—'Zara' in the Drawing-room—Advice to Amateur Actors—About Tableaux and Figure Scenes—A Tableau at Windsor Castle—Hints on the Production of Tableaux—'The Sleeping Beauty' as a Tableau—'The Magic Mirror'—Subjects Suitable for Representation—Acting Charades—How they should be got up—The Elizabethan 'Masques'—'Five o'Clock Teas' again—Garden Parties—A Garden Party in 'Lothair'—

‘Kettledrums’—Picnics—Hints for a Cold Collation—The Picturesque side of Picnics—End of the London Season ; arranging Country Visits—Etiquette for Guests at Country Houses.



THEY who live in society must not neglect the social duties : the small attentions, the little courtesies, the acts of reciprocal politeness, by which society is held together. They must know and be known, must exchange visits, must receive one another, and if, in performing this somewhat weary round they feel bored, must be careful not to allow their boredom to be detected. You, rigid moralist that you are, will tell me that this is hypocritical. I reply that politeness is not hypocrisy, but that truth is occasionally brutal. I recognise a wide distinction between putting forward what is false and not obtruding what is true. If a man, in yawning, should cover his mouth with his hand to hide what is always an ungraceful though an involuntary act, is he a hypocrite ? He does but conceal from his neighbour what his neighbour does not wish and has no right to know. After all, the principle here indicated forms the groundwork of our system of social *convenances*. That it provokes a good deal of disgust is indubitable, and I don't know any one who has given stronger expression to this feeling of disgust than Horace Walpole, though no man ever more absolutely lived for and in society. Writing to Sir Horace Mann, he says :— ‘ Don't you find that nine parts in ten of the world are of no use but to make you wish yourself with that tenth part ? I am so far,’ he continues, ‘ from growing used to mankind by living amongst them, that my natural ferocity and wildness does but every day grow worse. They tire me, they fatigue me ; I don't know what to do with them, I don't know what to say to them ; I fling open the windows, and fancy I want air ; and when I get by myself, I undress myself, and seem to have had people in my pockets, in my plaits, and on my shoulders ! I indeed find this fatigue worse in the country than in town, because one can avoid it there and has more resources ; but it is there, too. I fear 'tis growing old, but I literally seem to have murdered a man whose name was Ennui, for his ghost is ever before me. They say there is no English word for *ennui* ; I think you may translate it most literally by what is called “entertaining people” and “doing the honours ;” that is, you sit an hour with somebody you don't know and don't care for, talk about

the wind and the weather, and ask a thousand foolish questions, which all begin with, "I think you live a good deal in the country," or "I think you don't love this thing or that." Oh, 'tis dreadful! I suspect there is a good deal of hypocrisy or affectation in this bit of Horatian querulousness. As a matter of fact, one does not need to ask or answer foolish questions. And society itself has invented many ingenious expedients for lessening that *ennui* which the accurate observance of social conventionalities might induce.

Among these expedients may be classed the introduction of visiting-cards. As to the cards themselves, they should be as plain as possible; the gentleman's is always smaller than the lady's, whilst that of the lady herself is smaller than was formerly used. The cards of both gentlemen and ladies, remember, should be thin, unglazed, and of good tint and quality. As variations in the style of visiting-cards are constantly being made with more or less minuteness or abruptness of transition, it will be well, on every occasion of renewal, to ascertain whether, between the intervals of supply, there has been any notable change of fashion, and if so, to what extent this should be adopted, modified, or ignored. For this purpose the advice of the stationer will be practically sufficient. There would seem to be good reason for believing that playing-cards were originally used as visiting-cards. In the fourth plate of Hogarth's 'Marriage-à-la-Mode,' several playing-cards may be seen scattered on the floor, and on one can be read, 'Count Basset begs to no how Lade Squander sleapt last nite.' And a correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, (vol. iv. p. 195) records that about six or eight years before he wrote, during the repair of a house in Dean Street, Soho, four or five visiting-cards were found behind a marble chimney-piece in the front drawing-room, and in each case the name had been written on the back of a common playing-card. One of them was inscribed 'Isaac Newton.' The name, with a simple 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.' before it, is all that is required, except that, in the case of persons having wide-spread circles of friends, it may be convenient, and in some instances almost imperative, that the address should also be given as another instrument of identification. The style will vary in the case of persons of rank, whether social or military; and, for especial or technical purposes, in the case of persons entitled to an official designation. In illustration of this practice may be instanced such

possible examples as 'Viscount Eythorne,' 'Major Gatling,' 'Captain Torpedo,' 'Honourable Mrs. Dawsmere,' and so on. There is, it is proper to remark, some little difference of opinion as to whether it is better to use or to omit the honorary prefix which forms a part of the last example, and whether the name in this case should or should not be engraved as that of an ordinary commoner—'Mrs. Dawsmere.' It is, therefore, to a great extent left to the taste of the individual, and the practice of retaining the honorary title has the advantage just mentioned as attaching to the use of the address—of making identification the more ready and infallible.

There are refinements of combination which may be alluded to, but which it is unnecessary to pursue into any very great particularity of detail. Clerical and military office may be combined with hereditary rank or rank by courtesy. Thus there are at present common to the 'Peerage' and the 'Clergy List,' the Reverend the Earl of Carlisle, the Venerable Lord Say and Sele; to the 'Clergy List' and the 'Peerage' and titular honours of courtesy, the Reverend the Earl of Mulgrave, and the Hon. and Rev. A. B. and C. D., the designation of the last of whom has lately shown a happy tendency to variety as the Rev. the Hon. A. B., etc. The correctness of this latter form is affirmed by the analogous practice in the coincidence of social with military rank, as exemplified in such forms as General Lord Chelmsford, Colonel the Hon. E. F., etc.; from all which a general principle may be evolved, that a title or honour to which a man is born, which he inherits, or necessarily acquires by succession or otherwise, is closer to him, is more a part of him, than any function, grade, office, or character which he may have derived from the Church, the Horse Guards, or the Admiralty. It is for a kindred reason that accidental or professional honours, such as M.P., Q.C., R.A., and the hundred combinations of initial letters designating the membership of learned or *quasi*-learned societies, should not be allowed to appear on cards intended for general social distribution. It is proper also that official designations should not be given, except on cards for use in official circles. Thus, the British Ambassador in a foreign city returns official visits with a card inscribed, 'L'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique;' but with his acquaintances he leaves a card bearing merely his name, as Lord Lyons, Lord Odo Russell, etc. Some gentlemen



drop the prefix of 'Mr.,' and even some young ladies, by the recent adoption of a Continental fashion, drop the prefix of 'Miss,' and appear in the unadorned simplicity of only their Christian and surname ; but this is a return to original barbarism which no lady must venture to copy. A young lady, while still under her mother's wing, does not need a separate card : her name is engraved under that of her mother, thus :

Mrs. Shirley Moreton,  
Miss Shirley Moreton.

If there be more than one daughter presented, the card may run thus :

Mrs. Shirley Moreton,  
Miss and Miss Florence Shirley Moreton.

Or :

Mrs. Shirley Moreton,  
The Misses Shirley Moreton.

Some ladies use a pocket-book when leaving cards, and the practice has its advantages ; but whether card-case or pocket-book, let it be of the best quality, but perfectly unostentatious. The rule of distribution may thus be stated : a card for the lady of the house and her daughters (the latter are sometimes represented by turning up the edge of the card) ; another for the master of the house, and if there be a grown-up son or near male relative resident in the house, a third card for him. At one house no more than three cards must be left at one time. As married men are exempt from the social necessity of making calls, the wife takes her husband's cards with her, and leaves one or two with her own.

'In visiting-cards,' as has recently been observed by an expert in the science of good manners, 'care should be taken to conform with present usage, and to avoid anything considered to be in questionable taste, for a card is the representative of one's self. To the unrefined or under-bred person, the visiting-card is but a trifling and insignificant piece of paper ; but to the cultured disciple of social law it conveys a subtle and unmistakable intelligence. Its texture, style of engraving, and even the hour of leaving it, combine to place the stranger whose name it bears in a pleasant or a disagreeable attitude, even before his manners, conversation, and face have been able to explain his social position. The higher the civilisation

of a community, the more careful it is to preserve the elegance of its social forms. It is quite as easy to express a perfect breeding in the fashionable formalities of cards as by any other method, and perhaps, indeed, it is the safest herald of an invitation for a stranger. Its texture should be fine, its engraving a plain script, its size neither too small, so that its recipients shall say to themselves, "a whimsical person," nor too large, to suggest ostentation. Refinement seldom touches extremes in anything.'

Having decided upon the material form and appearance of the visiting-card, it will be well to follow that elegant little personal appendage to its various social uses. It accompanies the lady, or gentleman, or both together, on the morning call, which is understood to be best made not much before three, nor much after five, in the afternoon, the time varying, however, with the time of year, or as the locality is in London or in the country, or again according to any other circumstances which the caller or callers will probably know how to take into consideration. If, as not infrequently happens, a married lady should represent not herself only, but also her husband, in the round of her social peregrinations, she will leave two of his cards—that is, one each for the lady of the house on whom she calls and her husband, and one to serve as a token and memorial of her own visit. The same thing will happen, *mutatis mutandis*, if a husband and wife make a call in company at the house of a lady who is not at home to receive them. The practice of turning down one corner of a card is sometimes adopted when it is desirable that it should be understood that a call has been made in person, in contradistinction to a call which has been, in fact, made by deputy of a servant, who has been sent in charge of cards for that purpose. This is an allowed and recognised practice where professional or other engagements make it inconvenient or impossible for gentlemen to call on their own account; but it is contrary to all notions of respect and etiquette to send by post what, if it cannot be left in person, must be left by a friendly or domestic representative. The practice of sending cards by post is allowed by some authorities; but the later and better custom demands its unhesitating reprehension. It is too cheap an expression of respect to be recommended, and to a fastidious taste it is so repugnant as to be intolerable.

From cards we come to 'calls,' on which society falls back when visiting-cards have done their duty. A great deal of unnecessary satire has been lavished upon a custom, which, though it has its ridiculous and its wearisome side, is not without its advantages and its pleasant characteristics. I do not see, indeed, how society could exist if 'calls' were abolished. How should we make acquaintance, and by what process would acquaintances develop into friends? And can there be a more agreeable way of utilising our leisure than in looking up our neighbours, and chatting with them in the unrestrained intercourse of domestic life? No doubt it is sometimes a painful duty to pay visits or to receive them; I don't like Mrs. D——, with her Brummagem gentility, and regard the time as hopelessly wasted which is spent in calling upon her. Or I have some special work to accomplish, and cannot get through it in time, because Mrs. D——, whom *I* do not like, calls upon *me*, who do not like her, wasting my time and temper, and putting both of us to inconvenience. But, after all, these are exceptional cases. We may surely take it for granted that we like *most* of our acquaintances, and that most of them like *us*, and it is hardly a matter of impossibility so to arrange our daily engagements that 'a morning call' shall not greatly interrupt them. Much of the splenetic satire poured out upon 'calls' and 'morning visits' seems to me as beside the mark, as unreal and purely 'got up,' as the satire which fourth-rate dramatists and comic writers vent upon mothers-in-law. We must be sadly deficient in conversational resource if we cannot entertain one another—the caller and the *callee*—for the brief space to which it is allowable to protract a visit. Were it not for this excellent social institution, our English reserve and indifference would assume colossal proportions, and the hedge within which we enclose ourselves from contact with our fellows would become absolutely impassable. An authority on these subjects wisely remarks that 'the visit or call is a much better institution than is generally supposed. It has,' he admits, 'its drawbacks. It wastes much time; it necessitates much small talk. It obliges one to dress on the chance of finding a friend at home; but for all this it is almost the only means of making an acquaintance ripen into a friendship. In the visit all the strain which general society somehow necessitates is thrown off. A man receives you in his rooms cordially,

and makes you welcome, not to a stiff dinner, but an easy-chair and conversation. A lady, who in the ball-room or party has been compelled to limit her conversation, can here speak more freely. The talk can descend from generalities to personal inquiries; and need I say that if you wish to know a young lady truly, you must see her at home, and by daylight.' For myself, I do not think it a hardship to call upon an agreeable *materfamilias* and her charming daughters, and spend thirty or forty minutes in lively and intelligent talk, to which, somehow or other, their bright eyes lend a peculiar piquancy. But you will say that every *materfamilias* is not agreeable, and all daughters not charming. True: but, my good sir, do you expect roses to be without thorns? As well expect our English summer to be without rain. You must take the rough with the smooth; the unattractive with the delightful; cloud and sunshine. A fine law of compensation prevails in Nature; and if you strike a profit and loss account of the calls you pay in a year, I am sure you will find a large balance on the profit side.

An amusing story is told in illustration of the zeal with which some ladies go through this so-called penance of morning calls, which apparently fills in their lives a place second only to the pleasure of shopping. Lady B. was living in a part of Scotland where country houses lie scattered at a considerable distance from one another, and the round of visits she had marked out for herself would clearly occupy a whole day. To this plan her daughters objected, alleging that fasting for so many hours always made them ill. 'Ah,' replied Lady B., 'I have guarded against that difficulty by arranging to reach Castle T. at two o'clock. The Ts. will then be at luncheon, and will certainly invite us to partake of some.'

Lady B. had her way; she and her daughters started, called on two or three 'friends,' with whom they exchanged the usual conventional common-places, and arrived at Castle T. exactly at the calculated hour. Mrs. T. was delighted to see them, and entered on an animated conversation, but spoke no word of luncheon. The visitors felt the pangs of hunger so acutely that they could scarcely bear their part in the lively talk, and eagerly awaited the expected invitation. Half-past two came—a quarter to three. Lady B. could no longer prolong her stay, and took leave of her hostess. But in doing so she betrayed, to Mrs. T.'s astonishment and the intense delight of her daughters, the

subject of her secret thoughts. 'Good-bye,' she said, 'dear Mrs. Luncheon!' After a moment's wonder Mrs. T. took the hint, and invited her guests to take some refreshment. As she was really a very hospitable woman she would not be refused, and explained that for the convenience of some members of her family the luncheon hour had been altered to one. Lady B., on her part, made a full confession, and the whole party then sat down to an extemporised collation, which proved one of the most successful repasts ever served.

Another story, of a different kind, may be acceptable to the reader. A worthy, but somewhat punctilious gentleman, no longer in his robust youth, was persuaded by his wife to call upon some old friends of hers who had just come to settle in London, but with whom he was unacquainted. He at last gave his consent, after inquiring particularly where they lived, and whether his wife was certain as to the street and the number of the house.

'Oh yes,' said Mrs. D., 'I was there only last week. It is No. —, in — Street, Cavendish Square. I know the house perfectly well.'

It was the flush and maturity of summer, and the weather being hotter than we have any idea of in these degenerate days, Mr. and Mrs. D. resolved to start early and visit their friends before luncheon. When they entered the street, Mrs. D. felt a moment's hesitation, but it vanished on her recollecting that on her previous visit she had not crossed the Park, and had struck the street at the other end. She was very careful to say nothing to her husband, and, moreover, she felt assured that she remembered the exterior of the house too well to fall into any blunder.

'That is it, I suppose. Mr. —, did you not say?' growled her husband, irritated at his hot walk, and resenting his foolish consent to undergo the affliction of a morning call.

'Oh yes, certainly.'

Mrs. D. spoke with assurance: did she not remember the flowers in the windows and the creepers in the balcony?

When the door opened she felt some misgivings. The servant, the hall, the staircase, seemed to have undergone a change; but she was reassured when, on asking if Mrs. X. were at home, a reply was readily given in the affirmative. On being shown into the reception-room her doubts returned, for



the apartment was different in every respect to the one in which Mrs. X. had greeted her a few days before, and two gentlemen were there whom she did not know. Presently the servant came to say that Mrs. X. was dressing, but would be down in a few minutes. There was nothing to be done but wait, and no virtue to be cultivated but patience. Suddenly the door was thrown open, and a lady with flowers in her hair and wearing a low evening dress entered hastily. Mr. D. looked up astonished; but his gaze grew more bewildered when he saw his wife and her friend stop short in their swift advance to perform the usual feminine salutation.

Mrs. D. did not know—had never before seen—this Mrs. X.

Mrs. X. did not know—had never before heard of—this Mrs. D.

At last there came some hastily murmured apologies, and an explanation. Mrs. X. had been expecting an early visit from Mr. M., the great artist, to take her portrait, and had dressed accordingly. Another family of the same name as her own had recently bought a house a few doors lower down, and the circumstance had already caused some awkward mistakes. This family, of course, were Mrs. D.'s friends, and she had blundered about the house; not an unforgivable blunder in London, where one house reflects another, and the demon of uniformity reigns in street after street. To the comedy of errors, however, a pleasant conclusion was furnished by Mrs. X.'s earnest request that the visitors *malgré eux* would stay to luncheon, and in this way began an acquaintance which rapidly ripened into a warm friendship.

May all our mistakes, dear reader, end as happily!

If the lady of the house on whom the call is made be at home to receive her visitors, the latter are not—according to the present canons of etiquette, which in these trivial matters of detail are apt to be ephemeral and inconstant, and, in this particular instance, have only recently been adopted—to offer their cards to the servant for presentation. If they are so offered, however, the well-trained domestic will know how to suppress the 'pasteboard' without delivery, when the persons whom it nominally describes are present to answer for themselves; and following the servant to the drawing-room, will be verbally announced and received. In the case of calls about business,

or by one stranger upon another, say for such a purpose as an inquiry into the character of a servant, the old rule of sending in a card as an announcement of personality may still, for convenience sake, be observed.

A couple of ladies, whether in the relation of friends, or of mother and daughter, will frequently find it convenient to make calls together. In London the number of callers should ordinarily be kept down to two persons, whereas in the country an entire family may call all at once without indiscretion. The reasons for this are too obvious to require dwelling upon; but there is one advantage that may be stated in the London limitation of numbers, that in the case of families, their intercourse is all the more frequent because it is kept up by the visits only of instalments of their members.

Into the drawing-room of a house belonging to another person, callers will take care that, through their agency, or in their company, neither children nor dogs—the collocation is not complimentary, but it is inevitable—should be suffered to intrude.

If care be requisite in drawing up and issuing invitations—and, after all, it is upon the observance of these ‘minor morals’ that the social harmony depends—not less is it needful in replying to them. Whether through indolence, constitutional or acquired, or through ignorance, or through a stress of engagements, some persons are reprehensibly dilatory in answering the notes they receive. It must be assumed that they are unconscious of the inconvenience their dilatoriness causes. Yet let them apply the argument *ad hominem*. Let them suppose that they have sent out twelve invitations to a dinner-party; that next day they receive six answers only; will they not be much annoyed by the consequent impossibility of completing their arrangements? When the delay is due to either of the causes adverted to, it is almost inexcusable; but it is really unpardonable when it arises from a vulgar belief that to keep your friend waiting is to assert your own superiority. Moreover, the delay in the former case shows a want of proper management—of that method and order essential to the adequate discharge of the duties laid upon us by our social position. It is the easiest thing in the world for the mistress of a house to set apart a portion of the day for letter-writing, which, of course, will include the issue and acknowledgment

of invitations. A time for everything, and everything in its time, is a motto which the capable and careful housewife will not fail to act upon.

A prompt reply is a necessary act of courtesy. If in the affirmative it sets your friend's mind at rest, if in the negative, it gives her an opportunity of sending out another invitation to supply your place. Your friend, in arranging her party, has given the preference to A., B., C., and D. If D., yourself, cannot accept the invitation, she can then ask E., but only if you have replied without delay. She cannot ask E. unless she can give E. sufficient notice; for E., perhaps, belongs to that class of persons who take offence at a short invitation. You, I hope, are not one of those persons who deliberately defer replying to an invitation they do not specially favour, in the hope that one they like better may turn up. It is an elementary law of etiquette that an invitation to dinner should be answered immediately; if the servant wait, it should be returned by him; if it be left, an answer should be despatched at once; if it be sent by post, the answer should follow 'by return of post.' Should your husband be out at the time, you must of course await his return; or if he be from home for a day or two, you should write to your friend as follows:—'Dear Mrs. Z., Many thanks for your kind invitation, which I trust we may be able to accept; but my husband is in the country, and I am not certain as to his engagements. I will let you know the moment I hear from him.' Invitations from country friends should be answered immediately; so should wedding invitations, and invitations to private theatricals, concerts, and similar entertainments. Answers to 'at homes' may be sent within two days.

There is an art in receiving guests; some persons by a smile, a grasp of the hand, a well-chosen word or two, will at once put you at your ease, and make you feel that you are welcome; others, with a much more elaborate courtesy, will fail to produce so agreeable an impression. It all depends upon manner; and a lady desirous of standing well with society will find it advisable to pay special attention to this point. Understand, once for all, that 'manner' cannot be taught; it is not the product of any fixed rules; nor can it be acquired, like skill in dancing, through elaborate practice. It must spring from a natural *bonhomie* and good feeling; from a genuine desire to promote

the happiness of those with whom you are brought in contact ; but, on the other hand, much may be done by repressing impatience, by cultivating kindly relations with all your acquaintances, by conquering disagreeable habits and affectations. Some people seem *afraid* to be agreeable ; apparently they fear to lose their position by displaying anything like a cordial interest in those whom they gather around them. Such persons are generally as servile to their superiors as they are cold to their equals and haughty to their personal inferiors. Now it should be the great aim and guide of host and hostess to treat *all* their guests with equal politeness. They are not justified in inviting any one for the purpose of snubbing them. A rudeness on the part of a host or hostess is all the more unpardonable because a guest cannot resent it ; his very position *as a guest* compels him to endure the slight in silence. The Arab is sometimes spoken of as a barbarian ; but in the relation of host to guest he is a much more polished gentleman than many of your ‘upper ten thousand’ and their imitators, who apparently labour under the delusion that coldness and hauteur are signs of good breeding.

An authority upon etiquette sagely observes that the manner and mode of receiving guests is determined by the character of the reception. ‘The welcome itself is not supposed to vary in warmth ; although, as a matter of necessity, a welcome that has to be accorded to some two or three hundred guests cannot be as friendly, or as personal a one, as that offered to some ten to thirty guests ; but where “the perfect hostess” is at her post, her greeting is neither constrained, proud, nor hurried ; and although she can say but little to each guest on their arrival, yet her manner of saying that little conveys all that it is possible to convey of hospitable welcome.’ The writer adds :—‘Whatever disappointment or annoyance a hostess may feel at the moment of her reception—and it is not seldom that a hostess is tried in this way—she never allows her own vexation to appear on the surface, and is neither absent-minded nor distraite, bored nor vacant in manner, when shaking hands with her guests.’ Some hostesses seem to think, that when they have decorated their rooms, prepared their dinner or supper, and engaged Strauss’s band, or Signor Andantino Cantatalini, they have done their duty ; in truth, they have done the smallest part of it—have done what their housekeeper or butler could

have done just as well. The arduous part of a hostess's duty begins with the arrival of the first guest. The success of an entertainment—unless it be a purely formal one—depends absolutely on the 'manner' in which she receives the friends and acquaintances who have assembled at her request, and the tact with which she fuses the necessarily heterogenous elements into an harmonious whole.

Mr. Hayward, in his sketch of the late Lady Palmerston, puts before us a perfect hostess. 'Few things admitting of order,' he says, 'can be thoroughly well done without it. Her visiting book was kept as regularly as an accountant's ledger. So long as her health allowed she made a point of filling up her cards with her own hands, and she knew exactly whom she had invited for each of her alternate nights. Her good-nature was inexhaustible, nor was it ever known to give way under any extent of forwardness or tiresomeness. The quintessence of high-breeding is never to *ruffle*, *offend*, or *mortify*—never to cause an unpleasant feeling by a tone, a gesture, or a word; and, instead of interrupting or abruptly quitting wearisome or pushing visitors, she would listen till they ceased of their own accord, or were superseded and went away.'

In the late Lord Lansdowne, the same writer describes a perfect host:—"Consciously or unconsciously, he acted on Goethe's rule, never to pass a day without reading some good poetry, hearing some good music, and seeing some fine picture. "He looks," writes Sydney Smith, "for talents and qualities amongst all ranks of men, and adds them to his stock of society as a botanist does his plants; and whilst other aristocrats are yawning amongst Stars and Garters, Lansdowne is refreshing his soul with the fancy and genius he has found in odd places, and gathered to the marbles and pictures of his palaces." . . .

'Brillat-Savarin lays down that, to make a pleasant dinner-party, the guests should be so selected "that their occupations should be varied, their tastes analogous, and with such points of contact that there shall be no necessity for the odious formality of presentation." The guests at Lansdowne House were so selected; the host took care that all should share in the conversation; and when they were re-assembled in the drawing-room, he would adroitly coax them into groups, or devote himself for a minute or two, carelessly and without



effort, to the most retiring or least known. He was emphatically described as a right divine gentleman by one (Justice Talfourd) whom he had just been putting at his ease in this manner. He talked delightfully, and he listened as well as he talked.'

It is necessary to insist upon those qualities as essential to the perfect host and hostess in days when the old social order seems at a discount ; and the ambition of entertainers is centred in the costly decoration of their rooms and the accumulation of evidences of their wealth. People there are who evidently regard the command of great pecuniary resources as the sole qualification of a host. Lavish gilding and colour on your reception-chambers, crowd them with a medley gathering of guests, secure the attraction of some titled personage or professional beauty, and their idea of hospitality is satisfied. The truth is, to play the host or hostess as either part should be played, as Lady Palmerston or Lord Lansdowne played it, requires a combination of gifts and graces which is unfortunately rare : good-temper, intelligence, culture, refinement, and absolute self-forgetfulness. The perfect hostess thinks only of her guests ; the fashionable hostess of the day thinks only of herself.

Descending to smaller but not wholly unimportant matters, we may remind our readers that a good hostess will remain on the staircase landing, which at a London ball or 'At Home' is the post for receiving guests, for fully two hours. As the names of the guests are announced, she will shake hands with each, and address them in some graceful and appropriate words ; not, indeed, to delay them on the landing, but rather to invite them to enter the ball-room, and make room for fresh arrivals. She should not address to each the same stereotyped observation, but to every person say something individual and pertinent. At the same time she must be careful not to be drawn into a conversation with certain of her guests, as this would be unfair to the others, as well as a source of confusion and delay.

At a ball in the country the hostess's position is at the door of the ball-room. There she receives each comer, and utters her words of welcome. To one she will say :—'How kind of you to come from such a distance ! I fear you will feel fatigued, but a dance will, I hope, revive you.' To another :—'I am

delighted to see you looking so well. A quadrille is just beginning: will your daughters join?' When the full tale of guests is completed, the hostess does her utmost to keep all her guests well entertained. She finds partners for the young ladies who are not dancing; she provides the chaperons with some suitable persons to talk to, or makes up a card-party for them in a quiet corner; she sees that the young men are all actively employed; she is here, there, and everywhere, and yet always cool and self-possessed and quiet. A fussy hostess is a nuisance; and a party that cannot be kept going without a constant worry and rattle is as irksome as a machine which is always jarring and creaking, to the intense irritation of one's nerves. Perfect machinery works noiselessly; so does a perfect hostess.

A critical moment in the reception of guests is the interval between the arrival of dinner guests and the serving-up of dinner; it is then that her conversational talents are put to the severest trial. Sometimes this painful ordeal is unduly prolonged by the non-appearance of some guest without whom it would be indecorous to begin. A good hostess, though she knows that her dinner is spoilt by being thus kept back, and that her husband dislikes, above all things, a want of punctuality where dinner is concerned, endeavours to make the time pass as pleasantly as possible, by rendering the conversation general, and by bringing the guests acquainted with one another. The hostess who can tide over these awkward occurrences, so that the postponement of dinner from half to three quarters of an hour is hardly perceived, proves herself to be (from the Book of Etiquette point of view) a most finished hostess. The bad hostess wearies her guests in such a moment as this, by deploring the non-arrival of the absentee, by speculating as to the reason of delay in her coming, by declaring her conviction that the dinner will be spoilt, and by either asking her husband what o'clock it is, or by perpetually glancing at the clock on the mantel-piece, and remarking audibly 'A quarter past eight—twenty minutes past eight—half-past eight,' never allowing her guests to forget how the time is going, thus rendering the *contretemps* a thing to be remembered and related.

'There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality,' says Washington Irving, 'which cannot be described,

but is immediately felt, and puts the stranger at once at his ease.' Without this emanation from the heart, a hostess may be rigid in her observance of the minutiae prescribed in books of etiquette, and yet fail to attain success. Forms in themselves are useful, but not attractive; they must be animated by a cheerful and self-denying spirit if they are to become something more than rules which everybody respects but no one prizes. Too many hostesses imagine that when they have mastered the details, their work is done; in truth, it is only *begun*. You may learn the grammar of a language, and yet know nothing of its genius. So you may be precise in your knowledge of the rules of etiquette, and utterly ignorant of the true spirit of hospitality.

It is an excellent plan to set apart one evening in the week for the reception of visitors. Where this custom does not obtain, you should make your calls in the afternoon, or between three o'clock and six; that is, after luncheon and before dinner.

'Calls' may be divided into three classes:

- α. Visits of ceremony;
- β. Visits of congratulation or sympathy;
- γ. General calls.

In reference to each, a few remarks will be offered.

α. Visits of ceremony are those made for the purpose of presenting letters of introduction, or after parties. Letters of introduction are seldom given to persons in town, because it is assumed that their stay is only temporary; and such letters are addressed to none but permanent residents. In the country, they are almost indispensable, particularly when a family first settle in a new neighbourhood, and desire to mingle in its society. In the latter case, it is the rule for the residents to call on the new-comers, unless the latter are provided with introductions, when they must be the first to call, leaving with their letters a card or cards, and then waiting until they receive a proper recognition. In returning a visit made with a letter of introduction, the caller must go in if the family be at home. Of course, in large towns no such custom exists; for, obviously, the residents would be able to do little else if they called upon every fresh arrival, to say nothing of the fact that they might not desire to cultivate the acquaintance of but a very few of those new-comers. If your letter of introduction be one for a special purpose, you will send it in along with your card, and

ask for an interview. In giving letters of introduction great care should be exercised, and you should become sponsor only for a friend, and for an object you can approve, or for a person whom you thoroughly know and can trust. They should be left open, if given to their bearers, who may then satisfy themselves respecting their tone and tenure. You know the old story of the London physician who sent a sick patient to Scarborough with a letter of introduction to a medical friend. The lady, one of that numerous class whose ailments belong to their imagination, was induced to open the letter, and its perusal made her a wiser if a sadder woman. It ran thus:—‘Dear —, I send you a rich old woman, who is always fancying herself ill. Bleed her freely. Keep her thirty days, and send her back to me.’ So equivocal an introduction has, you see, its disadvantages!

The day after a ball you must call at the house of your hostess, and leave a card. After a dinner-party, you should make a personal visit within two or three days; and after a *soirée* or evening party, within a week. All such visits should resemble wit in their brevity—not exceeding the length of a reasonable sermon, twenty or thirty minutes. If during your call another visitor arrive, you will wait two or three minutes, and join in the conversation, before you get up to take your leave. You must not appear to shun the new-comer, as if he were a patient just recovering from a contagious disease. In such cases, however, where visitors are not previously known to each other, a hostess of tact will in some informal manner make them sufficiently acquainted for the purposes of a passing conversation, but not so as to commit either, under penalty of rudeness, to a permanent or future acquaintance which should not be mutually desirable. I suppose I need hardly tell the reader that it is only on the stage that visitors enter a drawing-room umbrella in hand, especially in wet or dirty weather, when it should absolutely and without alternative be left in the hall. Gentlemen may take their hat and cane, but if so, they will not deposit them on table, sofa, or chair; nor will they revolve their hat on the top of their cane as if they were illustrating an experiment in rotation. The glove must be removed from the right hand; no gentleman would wish to interpose a glove between his hand and that of a fair lady.

And here I may digress a little. Let the reader remember

that there is a right and a wrong way of hand-shaking. It is horrible when your unoffending digits are seized in the sharp compress of a kind of vice, and wrung and squeezed until you feel as if they were reduced to jelly. It is not less horrible when you find them lying in a limp, nerveless clasp, which makes no response to your hearty greeting, but chills you like a lump of ice. Shake hands as if you meant it, swiftly, strenuously, and courteously, neither using an undue pressure, nor falling wholly supine. You may judge of the character of a man from the way in which he shakes hands; there is the shake *lymphatic*, the shake *aggressive*, the shake *supercilious*, the shake *imperative*, the shake *suspicious*, the shake *sympathetic*, and the shake *emotional*. Charles Lamb describes also the *pump-handle* shake, which is executed by taking a friend's hand and working it up and down, through an arc of fifty degrees, for about a minute and a half. 'To show its nature, force, and character, this shake should be performed with a firm and steady motion. No attempt should be made to give it grace, and still less variety, as the few instances in which the latter has been tried have uniformly resulted in dislocating the shoulder of the person on whom it has been attempted. On the contrary, persons who are partial to the *pump-handle* shake should be at some pains to give an agreeable, tranquil movement to the operation, which should on no account be continued after perspiration on the part of your friend has commenced.' Then there is the *pendulum* shake, which somewhat resembles the former; but, as its name implies, the movement is on a horizontal instead of a perpendicular direction. 'It is executed by sweeping your hand horizontally towards your friend's, and after the junction is effected, moving with it from one side to the other according to the pleasure of the parties.' Nor must the *tourniquet* shake be forgotten, which derives its name from the instrument employed by surgeons to stop the circulation of the blood in a limb about to be amputated. You grasp the hand of your friend as far as you can in your own, and then contract the muscles of your thumb, fingers, and palm till you have induced any degree of compression you may propose in the hand of your friend. Particular care ought to be taken, if your hand be hard and big, and that of your friend small and soft as a maiden's, not to make use of the tourniquet shake to such a degree that it will crush the small bones of the wrist



out of their places. It is seldom safe to apply it to gouty or hot-tempered persons.

You will see some persons thrust forth their hand with a sudden jerk, like that of a steam-engine suddenly set in motion ; and lo, they have taken possession of your own, and are doing with it as they will, before you have recovered breath. Others put forward their fingers with an apparent timidity or reluctance, and compel you to pounce upon them and draw them towards you, in order to perform an effective shake. Others again extend their hand timidly, partly withdraw it and again extend it, until you are uncertain whether or no the act of hand-shaking will be performed after all. As for the cold-blooded creatures who austere offer one or two fingers, I recommend you to ignore them ; look loftily over them as if unconscious of their existence and—their fingers. But when a lady (and more particularly a fair one) does you the honour to offer her hand, take it with an air of grateful deference which will show how you appreciate the honour ; do not drop it instantly as if the touch scared you, nor hold it so long as to cause her a feeling of uneasiness.\*

\* Leigh Hunt, in his genial way, treats this subject sensibly. He says that from the first time he began to notice the manners of people, he observed the errors in the custom of shaking hands. Some persons grasped everybody's hand alike—with an equal fervour of grip. You would have thought that Jenkins was the best friend they had in the world ; but on succeeding to the squeeze, you found it, though you might be but a slight acquaintance, equally flattering to yourself ; and on the appearance of somebody else (whose name, it turned out, the operator had forgotten), the crush was no less complimentary :—the face was as earnest, and the shake as long and close and rejoicing, as if the semi-unknown had been a friend newly returned from the wilds of Central Africa.

But, as a contrast, you find a gentleman, now and then, as coy of his hand as if he were a prude, or had a whitlow. It was in vain that your pretensions did not go beyond the 'civil salute' of the ordinary shake ; or that being introduced to him in a friendly manner, and expected to shake hands with the rest of the company, you could not in decency omit his. His fingers, half protruding and half retreating, seemed to think that you were going to do them a mischief ; and when you got hold of them, all the shake was on your side ; the other hand did but proudly or pensively acquiesce—there was no knowing which ; you had to sustain it, as you might a lady's, in handing her to a seat ; and 'twas an equal trouble to know whether to shake it or to let it go. The one seemed a violence done to the patient ; the other an awkward responsibility brought upon yourself. You wondered, all the evening, whether the person had conceived some dislike or prejudice against you, till, when the party broke up, you saw him behave like an

β. We pass on to visits of sympathy, which may either be of congratulation, or of condolence.

You will call on a newly-married couple within a few days of their return home, leaving your card if you are not on very intimate terms, but calling in person if they or their parents rank among your old friends.

Visits of condolence should be paid within a week of the event that has rendered them necessary. Here again, it is only friends who should seek admission, and these should be careful not to say too much, or to stay too long. When we are suffering from a great sorrow, silent sympathy affords us the best consolation. We cannot bear to utter, or to hear, many words on a subject which, whenever thought of, moves us to tears. What would you think of the surgeon who continually probed an open wound? Again, few are they who, in the presence of a profound grief, can say the right thing; and hence the sense of incapacity which afflicts us with a certain awkwardness, and plunges us into a conventionalism of expression that to a mourner sounds constrained and cold.

γ. General calls.

I have already named 'the time o' day' at which such visits should be paid. Be specially careful to avoid the hour of luncheon, and do not delay until close upon the hour for dinner. Never make your visit so long as to create in the mind of your host an intense desire that you would go. No well-bred actor lingers on the stage until the audience shows signs of weariness. There is sound sense in the remark which Bulwer Lytton put in the mouth of his hero Pelham, that he always withdrew when

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equally ill-used gentleman to all who practised the same civil unconventionality.

Both these errors (says Leigh Hunt) might as well be avoided; but, of the two, we must say we prefer the former. If it does not look so much like particular sincerity, it looks more like general kindness: and if those two virtues are to be separated (which they assuredly need not be, if considered without system), the world can better afford to dispense with an unpleasant truth than a gratuitous humanity. Besides, it is more difficult to make sure of the one than to practise the other, and kindness itself is the best of all truths. As long as we are sure of that, we are sure of something, and of something pleasant. It is always the best, if not in every instance the most logical means. This unusual shyness is sometimes attributed to modesty, but never, we suspect, with justice, unless it be that sort of modesty whose fear of committing itself is grounded in pride.'—LEIGH HUNT, *The Indicator*, xlvii.

he had said something effective, because it was his object to leave such an impression as would make people desirous of seeing him again. It is to be presumed that most people can talk sensibly and amusingly for twenty minutes; but of how many would the resources last for sixty? And their stock of conversational small change exhausted, they must necessarily be reduced to 'utter' base coin.

When a visitor rises to take his leave, the lady of the house rings for a servant to be in readiness to open the door.

At morning calls it is not usual to introduce visitors to one another, except in the informal manner and for the temporary purpose just indicated; but if the hostess have reason to believe that the introduction would be mutually agreeable, she should duly accomplish it. If a lady express a wish to know a gentleman, or a superior to make the acquaintance of an inferior, neither must decline the honour. Observe, in making an introduction, you always present the inferior to the superior, the gentleman to the lady. The formalities observed are as follow:—Preceding the person to be introduced, you address the person to whom he is to be presented, saying, with a slight inclination of the head, 'Will you allow me, Mrs. Jones, to introduce Mr. Brown?' Mrs. Jones replies with a bow (and, if she like, a smile), and Mr. Brown also bows—as gracefully as he can (*par parenthèse*, let me ask, why do not gentlemen learn to bow gracefully? The smallest thing, if it is to be done, should be well done); after which the introducer retires, and leaves her guests to plunge into conversation.\*

\* I am indebted to a writer in the *Queen* for the following useful remarks:

'There is perhaps no social observance in which etiquette is so closely followed as in the paying "morning calls," or one wherein ladies are more apt to make mistakes, either through forgetfulness, carelessness, misapprehension, or even through ignorance of the rules of etiquette applicable to the occasion. A mistake arising from either or any of these causes brings about very much the same results. In some cases, when a breach of this etiquette has occurred, an opportunity is afforded for an explanation or an apology in the form of an excuse, with a view to putting the matter in the best possible light. Two reasons would suggest the following this course—one being the fear of appearing to be ill-mannered, and the other the fear of forfeiting a desirable acquaintance; but the moment for these explanations and apologetic and self-accusatory little speeches is seldom forthcoming until too late for the setting-right process to be attempted. On this point—paying and receiving calls—ladies stand upon strict and ceremonious etiquette with each other, and they are surprisingly quick to attribute any neglect of its

When may the stereotyped excuse 'Not at home' be employed? Is it at any time a justifiable plea? Well, in spite of stern moralists, I think the most scrupulous may resort to it, now that it is universally understood to mean simply that you are engaged—that it is not convenient for you to be seen. At the same time, it is by no means a pleasant form of evasion, and is almost sure to give offence. It is better, as a rule, to submit to a little annoyance, rather than instruct your servant to tell what to her or him will certainly appear to be an untruth, and by the person to whom it is uttered will probably be resented as an insult. Even white lies leave (as the children say) blisters on the tongue.

Some persons are accustomed to keep visitors waiting for a considerable time when they call. This is a gross rudeness, which in most cases cannot be condoned by an apology. If the hostess should be in her reception-room when a visitor is announced, she will rise and advance a few steps to receive him. As for the visitor, he will, if not a complete stranger, take a seat without waiting for an invitation, holding his hat easily in his hand, or placing it on the floor close to his chair. He will undemonstratively open the door for any lady who during his call may take leave of their common hostess, at whose disposal he will consider himself, should she request him to accompany her visitor to her carriage. If he should be

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rules to the wrong motive, that is, to an intentional slight purposely inflicted—which reading is often very wide of the mark. Still, were the greatest good-natured construction put upon an error of this kind, and no offence taken, it could not be overlooked or ignored; and a lady could not act as if such error had not been perpetrated, as, if it had been committed with an ulterior motive, by overlooking it she would place herself in rather an awkward position with regard to her acquaintance by so doing, and would herself commit a breach of the necessary etiquette. This etiquette, which perhaps appears to the uninitiated trivial, irritating, and over-punctilious, is in reality a power which society places in the hands of ladies to govern and determine their acquaintanceships and their intimacies; to regulate and decide whom they will visit and whom they will not, whom they will admit into their friendship and whom they will keep on the most distant footing, whose acquaintance they desire further to cultivate, and whom they are rigorously resolved to keep at arm's length. It can therefore be readily understood that to fail in the observance of its well-defined rules, is, with ladies, a point of some moment, so much social intercourse depending upon its due observance. . . Ignorance of the rules which regulate the paying calls brings many inconveniences, disappointments, and annoyances in its train, too numerous to be here particularised.'

honoured by being called upon to perform this service, he will return, after its accomplishment, for the purpose of paying his adieu to his hostess before he departs himself.

When two or three visitors are present, a courteous hostess will be careful not to pay more attention to one than to the others, and will do her best to engage all of them in conversation. To the last comer she will, however, address herself more particularly for a minute or two after he has taken his seat, to prevent him from feeling that his call is inopportune or inconvenient, and the first arrival will then prepare to relieve her of his presence. Some ladies show a singular expertness in conversing with several guests, like those Indian jugglers who keep half a dozen balls up in the air at the same time; others would break down hopelessly, unless their guests had the good sense and the good feeling to come to the rescue.

It need hardly be said that ladies never call upon gentlemen, unless officially or professionally, or unless the lady be married and the gentleman on whom she calls is an old friend and adviser, whose grey hairs invest him with certain privileges. In the latter case she will, of course, let her husband know of the intended visit.

Formerly, as has been already indicated, it was the custom—which, though for the present in abeyance, may at any time again become fashionable—for a gentleman, when calling, to send up his card. If the lady of the house were ‘out’ or ‘not at home,’ he would leave his card or cards, and go away after making inquiries of the servant respecting the health of the family.

I conclude with a parting word of advice: While your guests are with you, do your best to make them feel that they are thoroughly welcome, and give up to them all your thought and attention. Do this, not so much out of respect to them as to yourself: no one benefits more by an act of courtesy than the person who performs it.

I pass on to some general remarks.

Do you know Mrs. Gaskell’s admirable tale of ‘Cranford,’ with its graphic pictures of the society and social life of an English provincial town?

If so, you will remember the ‘party,’ the very ‘grand party,’ given by the Honourable Mrs. Jamieson, in order to introduce Lady Glenmire to the ladies of Cranford.



You will recollect that Mrs. Jamieson resided in a large house just outside the town. A road, which had once been a street, ran right before this mansion, which opened out upon it without any intervening garden or court. Whatever the sun was about, he never shone on the front of that house. To be sure, the rooms inhabited by the family were at the back, looking on to a pleasant garden; the front windows belonged only to the kitchens, and housekeeper's rooms, and pantries, in one of which Mr. Mulliner, the butler, was understood to sit. In truth, a side-glance often revealed to the awed passer-by the back of a head covered with hair-powder, which also extended itself over his coat-collar, down to his very waist; and this imposing back was always engaged in reading the *St. James's Chronicle*, opened wide, which in some degree accounted for the length of time the said newspaper was in reaching others, equal subscribers with Mrs. Jamieson, though, in right of her honourableness, she always had the reading of it first. . . . Mr. Mulliner seemed never to have forgotten his condescension in coming to live at Cranford. Miss Jenkyns at times had stood forth as the undaunted champion of her sex, and spoken to him on terms of equality; but even Miss Jenkyns could get no higher. In his pleasantest and most gracious moods he looked like a sulky cockatoo. He did not speak except in gruff monosyllables. He would wait in the hall when he was begged not to wait, and then look deeply offended because he had been kept there, while with trembling, hasty hands the ladies of Cranford prepared themselves for appearing in the serene severity of Lady Glenmire's presence.

Miss Pole hazarded a small joke as they went up-stairs, intended, though addressed to them, to afford Mr. Mulliner some slight amusement. All smiled, in order to seem as if they were quite at ease, but the wooden muscles of Mr. Mulliner's face never relaxed, and the ladies were called back into their former gravity.

Cheerful enough was Mrs. Jamieson's drawing-room; the evening sun streamed its radiance into it, and the large square window was garlanded round with flowers. The furniture was white and gold; not the later style, Louis Quatorze I think they call it, all shells and twirls; no, Mrs. Jamieson's chairs and tables had not a curve or bend about them. The chair and table legs diminished as they neared the ground, and were

straight and square in all their corners. The chairs were all in a row against the walls, with the exception of four or five which stood in a circle round the fire. They were railed with white bars across the back, and knobbed with gold; neither the railings nor the knobs invited to ease. There was a japanned table devoted to literature, which was represented by a Bible, a Prayer-book, and a Peerage. Another table, a square Pembroke, was dedicated to the Fine Arts, as you saw at a glance from the nature of its contents—a kaleidoscope, conversation-cards, puzzle-cards (tied together to an interminable length with faded pink satin ribbon), and a box painted in fond imitation of the drawings which decorate tea-chests.

On the entrance of the Cranford ladies, Mrs. Jamieson stood up, smiled a torpid smile of welcome, and looked helplessly beyond them at Mr. Mulliner, as if she hoped he would place them in chairs, for, if he did not, she never could. Lady Glenmire, however, came to the rescue of the hostess, and, somehow or other, they found themselves for the first time placed agreeably, and not formally, in Mrs. Jamieson's house.

Conversation followed; after which Mr. Mulliner brought up tea. Very delicate was the china, very old the plate, very thin the bread and butter, and very small the lumps of sugar. After tea, there was more conversation, and then the guests and their hostess resorted to cards—the old-fashioned games, Preference, Ombre, Quadrille—to which unexciting amusement the remainder of the evening was devoted.

Such parties as Mrs. Jamieson's are still common in quiet country towns; but in 'Society,' it is impossible to bring people together unless you offer them something more exciting. Tea-parties are given, of course, but on a larger scale; and they are relieved by more pretentious reunions, such as conversaziones, private concerts, private theatricals, five-o'clock teas, garden-parties, and matineés.

The etiquette attaching to these is not very elaborate, and the principles underlying it are simply stated: that the host or hostess should do his or her utmost to entertain his or her guests, and that the guests should cheerfully respond to the efforts of the host or hostess. There should be an entire absence of constraint, affectation, pretension, and no more formality than is requisite to preserve order. The great solvent which on these occasions should fuse the various members into one homo-

geneous whole is good temper; and this is as necessary an ingredient in the relations of guest to guest as guest to hostess.

For conversaziones, 'At Homes,' and 'receptions,' invitations should be issued ten or fourteen days beforehand. A short invitation, except under very special circumstances, conveys the idea that the person to whom it is sent has no engagements which can possibly occupy his time. Conversaziones and the like begin about nine or ten, and last until twelve or one. The host and hostess stand near the door to receive their visitors, who, after exchanging with them the usual compliments, break up into small groups, and engage in conversation, or examine the various objects, artistic, scientific, or extraordinary, displayed upon the various tables. It is customary on these occasions to show off some new 'lion,'—Mr. Peregrine, the Mesopotamian explorer; Mr. Apollo Jones, the new poet; a Zulu prince, an Afghan chief, or the Ascension Island ambassador. No introductions are required. The hostess is at liberty to ask any guest to sing or play, and any lady accepting the invitation is conducted by the gentleman nearest to her to the piano, and begins at once without irritating attempts to attract notice. The cavalier remains beside her to turn over the music, and lead her back to her seat at the end of her performance, during which the compliment of silent attention should be paid to the performer.

Tea and coffee, on these occasions, are provided in a separate room; and ices and light refreshments are handed round in the course of the evening. At 'receptions,' supper is sometimes served, to the delight of most Britons; but it is not *de rigueur*.

Gentlemen visitors at conversaziones, and 'At Homes,' are reminded that the 'whole duty of man,' under such circumstances, is to do what lies in his power to promote the general amusement. Those with artistic or scientific proclivities may make themselves useful by explaining to ladies the peculiarities or beauties of the specimens set before them. Let them be sure, however, of their ground. In these days it is not safe to rely on the ignorance of their fair companions. The lady on Fitz-Boodle's arm may be a Girton graduate, and have passed at Cambridge in Classical and Mathematical honours. Dire will be his confusion if he stumble into some mistatement which, with a meaning smile, she hastens to correct.

The scale upon which a conversazione is given must depend,

of course, upon the resources of the giver. If you have not a suite of rooms at your disposal, a good collection of what Mrs. Malaprop might call 'articles of bigotry and virtue,' and the means of presenting some distinguished stranger, it is well to confine yourself to an 'At Home' or a 'reception.' Satire has launched its fire-tipped arrows at this form of polite amusement, and sometimes, no doubt, with good cause; but, on the other hand, few pleasanter diversions of a semi-intellectual character can be devised than a well-managed *conversazione*. Occasionally it assumes a public character, as in the famous instance recorded by the author of 'The Princess,' where Sir Walter Vivian gave up his broad lawns for 'all a summer's day' to his tenants, and the members of the institute of the neighbouring borough. The host may then expect that his efforts to entertain 'the public' will be seconded by his friends and private visitors. So it was, we know, at Vivian Place :—

'One reared a font of stone  
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
The fountain of the moment, playing now  
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down  
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon : Echo answered in her sleep  
From hollow fields : and here were telescopes  
For azure views ; and there a group of girls  
In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
Dislinked with shrieks and laughter . . .  
And there through twenty posts of telegraph  
They flashed a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations : so that Sport  
Went hand-in-hand with Science.'

And 'Sport hand-in-hand with Science' furnishes an admirable motto for a *conversazione*, fitly explaining its *raison d'être*.

Some general remarks upon afternoon parties may next be hazarded. Whether they are to be Brobdingnagian or Lilliputian, large or small, the invitations (or 'At Home' cards) should be issued two or three weeks beforehand. For a small party, the giver may use his visiting card, writing the magic words 'At Home' under the name in the centre, and the name of the guest at the top of the card in the right-hand corner. Should any special amusement be provided, or any particular person engaged to perform, it is desirable to mention these

facts on the card ; in the former case, the word 'music' is sufficient : in the latter, the name of the performer should be given.

The hours must also be named ; they range from 'four to seven.' At ordinary afternoon parties the invited guests arrive or leave at any time between these three hours, and remain as long as they like. If there be no other entertainment than amateur music and general conversation punctuality is not imperative, and therefore when some special performer is engaged his name is inscribed on the invitation card in order to give the guests an opportunity of arriving, if they wish it, in time to hear him.

At all 'afternoon parties'—whatever their 'generic' name—refreshments consisting of tea, coffee, champagne and claret cups, fruit, ices, sweets, are served in the dining-room ; and the guests are at liberty to repair thither on their arrival, to partake of refreshments before proceeding to the salon, or during the pauses between the different performances. The gentlemen present escort the ladies to the dining-room. During the music, singing, conjuring, reciting, or other exhibitions, guests whose great minds soar above such trifles must not manifest their indifference—and their want of good breeding—by conversing in a loud tone ; let them wait for the next interval, and then retire. If they have come for the pleasure of visiting and conversing with their friends, they must contrive to enjoy that pleasure without insulting their hostess or wounding the self-respect of the performers.

At 'afternoon parties' the hostess usually receives the guests at the door of the drawing-room, and shakes hands with them on their entrance, whether they be personal acquaintances or strangers introduced to her for the first time through 'husband or friends.' She can graduate the cordiality of her shake in accordance with the degree of intimacy of her guests. A friend who wishes to introduce a stranger will previously apply for an invitation card. At 'afternoon parties' the guests retire as they list, like the features of a dissolving view, and are not expected to take leave of their hostess.

One by one the guests are going,  
One by one—the short, the tall ;  
As the sands of Time are flowing,  
So they vanish from the hall.\*

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\* *Not* by Miss A. A. Proctor.



Dr. Young, the poet of the ‘Night Thoughts’—a poem, by the way, much more popular among the French than among ourselves—says of a certain Mammia, that—

‘Her two red lips affected zephyrs blow  
To cool the Bohea and inflame the beau ;  
While one white finger and a thumb conspire  
To lift the cup and make the world admire.’

Mammias of the present day have few opportunities of exciting admiration among the beaus at ‘five o’clock teas,’ for to these pleasant refectons it is not usual to invite members of ‘the other sex ;’ and, accordingly, Lady Morgan’s not very delicate joke would be out of place—‘Sugar yourselves, gentlemen, and I’ll milk you all.’ They are not, however, wholly excluded, and occasionally a cavalier desirous of specially complimenting the lady of the house will present himself among the tea-drinking bevy. By the women ‘five o’clock teas’ are recognised as a great institution, like the Church of England or the *Times* newspaper ; and they certainly afford a desirable opportunity of exchanging womanly chat and confirming agreeable intimacies. I am referring, of course, to the ‘five o’clock tea’ proper, which is usually limited to some ten to fifteen people, and not to the ‘teas’ at which fifty to a hundred guests assemble, and, instead of conversation, music, amateur or professional, prevails.

On the card of invitation ‘five o’clock teas’ are called ‘At Homes,’ but they have their proper designation in familiar conversation. They seem to have replaced the old ‘kettledrums,’ though differing from them in some few particulars, and are chiefly distinguished by their comparative freedom from the restraints of etiquette. Thus a guest, on arriving, does not inquire if the hostess be at home, but enters as a matter of course. If a gentleman, he deposits hat and overcoat ; if a lady, the servant will conduct her to a bedroom, or, at a large ‘at home,’ to a cloak-room. At large ‘teas’ refreshments are served in the dining-room, where a large buffet is erected, and several maid-servants are in attendance. These refreshments consist of tea, coffee, sherry, champagne-cup, claret-cup, fruits, sweets, ices, sandwiches, bread-and-butter, fancy biscuits, and cakes. The hostess is on the alert to see that, in the intervals between the music, singing, or recitations, the ladies present are taken down by gentlemen, or, if there be but few of them at her disposal, she invites some of the ladies to go down together.

The refreshments provided at small 'teas' are on a lesser scale, but similar in character. Ices are not given, however, and no fruits; while the tea is served in the smaller drawing-room, or in an adjacent ante-chamber or boudoir. When the number of guests is very small, the tea is dispensed by the ladies of the house or by the gentlemen present. When the number rises to twenty or thirty, tea is served in the dining-room. On the arrival of a guest, the servants inquire if she will take tea or coffee, and, when the answer is in the affirmative, immediately conduct her to the dining-room, after which she is duly preceded to the drawing-room.

At 'afternoon teas' the guests move about freely, and converse with one another as inclination prompts. A similar liberty of movement is allowed to the hostess, who, attended by her daughters, goes from guest to guest, exchanging kindly inquiries and bits of gossip. At very small 'teas' the conversation will be general, and the guests will probably find it unnecessary to quit their seats. If there should be any music, courtesy demands that they should listen to it in silence.

Guests are not required to take leave of the hostess in any formal manner, unless it be their first visit to her house, or she should chance to be near the drawing-room door at the time of their departure. On the other hand, the last few guests will be expected to pay the usual compliments, as they could not possibly take their departure unnoticed. The hostess does not ring to order the door to be opened to the 'passing guest,' or for her carriage to be called; but she (the guest) proceeds to the hall, where the servants in attendance call up her carriage and usher her into it. At 'five o'clock teas' carriages are always ordered to wait, and a departing guest, therefore, is not likely to be long detained in the hall. No fees are given to the servants.

To an invitation to an 'at home' you are not expected to send a reply, nor is it customary to embellish the invitation-card with the magic initials R. S. V. P. (*Répondez, s'il vous plait*—'Answer, if you please'); but if you know that your attendance is impossible, there can be no objection to your sending a polite excuse. The trouble is not so great as the courtesy.

You should leave your card within a week of the 'at home.'

If the 'at home,' or 'reception,' or 'small and cosy,' follow a dinner-party, no amusement is provided for the guests, who,

it is presumed, will be able to entertain themselves by conversing with friends and acquaintances. Her Majesty's Ministers and the leaders of fashion almost always give an 'at home' or a 'small and cosy' after a dinner-party, to enable them to acknowledge the numerous persons who have claims upon them, or to bring together a larger number than is possible at any well-conducted dinner.

A 'five o'clock tea,' it is needless to say, *precedes* dinner, between which and the fatigue of the evening calls it affords a very desirable interval of rest.

'Receptions' may be given once a week or once a fortnight, and a clever hostess will soon learn how to make them successful. The first essential is, tact; and the second, tact; and the third, tact. Her motto should be the metropolitan policeman's—'Keep moving!' She must not allow her guests to weary, which, if they have been well selected, they will *not* do. If she see any symptoms of nascent *ennui*, she must hasten, by some prompt device, to stamp out the fell disease. She will be here, there, and everywhere, and, if she observe a guest fainting under the infliction of some relentless person, will at once proceed to the rescue. She will do all she can to facilitate the arrangement of her guests into suitable groups, collecting the round men in one place and the square men in another, and taking care that Wisdom (as represented by Miss Minerva Robinson) is not thrown into juxtaposition with Folly (as represented by young Plantagenet Brown). She will mercifully separate the new poet and the old critic, Anglican orthodoxy and American heterodoxy. To compare great things with small, the part of the hostess must be that which Sydney Smith ascribes to the onion in his celebrated rhyming receipt for a salad:—

'Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,  
And, scarce suspected, animate the whole.'

So she too, without exaggerated effort or pretension, without personal display, and unsuspected, indeed, by her guests, will 'animate the whole.'

The reader will remember *Punch's* picture-jest of the lady of the house approaching a musical visitor with the request that she will sing a song, because she wants the guests to begin talking. Certain it is that music seems very generally regarded as a cover and an excuse for conversation. The room

is crowded with more or less sensible people . . . yet there they sit, grave and silent as the carved figures on the temple-tombs of Egypt. . . . Occasionally a whisper swells into a half-audible murmur, to die away again as soon as the whisperer discovers that he has spoken loud enough to be heard. . . . What is to be done? The hostess does not wish her party to be turned into a Quaker's meeting. . . . 'My dear Miss Jones, would you oblige us with one of your charming ballads?' . . . Miss Jones is led to the piano, formally and grimly, like a victim to the sacrificial altar. . . . She takes her seat—she strikes a chord or two. . . . Immediately every tongue is loosed, as if it had suddenly undergone a surgical operation . . . and a loud buzz of voices, the busy hum of men and women, of courtly cavaliers and comely ladies, spreads through the room. The spell has been broken—the dread spell of Silence—and thenceforward the reign of Talk prevails. Hard upon the obliging singer, is it not? And yet, in circles calling themselves 'polished,' and professing to be 'æsthetic,' this barbarous custom obtains without remonstrance.

It is needless to say that at private concerts no such breach of good manners is permissible. These take place between two and six p.m., or between eight and ten p.m. At the later hour evening-dress must be worn. Private concerts may be of two kinds; in some the singers and instrumentalists are professionals hired for the occasion, in others they are amateurs. If the latter, care should be taken to select the best 'available talent,' and the performance should be under competent direction. Do not let the programme be too long, and see that it is well varied. Between the parts refreshments may be handed round.

Private theatricals are a very popular form of amusement; but to ensure success their getting-up should be carefully and energetically ordered. The performers should always be amateurs, and, if possible, the scenery should be from amateur brushes, and the music furnished by an amateur orchestra. The pieces should be selected with judgment, so as to be well within the means of the actors, both intellectual and material. The great fault of amateurs is that they attempt too much, whereas a one-act comedietta, or two-act comic drama carefully produced and well acted will give more satisfaction than a three-act or five-act drama, scrambled through with more



audacity than intelligence. The character of the scenery and the appointments will depend, of course, on the circumstances under which the entertainment is given. If there be no room fitted up as a theatre and no apparatus for shifting scenery, you may content yourself with the construction of a small platform at one end of the largest apartment at your disposal, always taking care to provide for the exits and entrances of your performers. A curtain is easily arranged, and by any simple device may be made to rise and fall; nor will there be any difficulty in running a row of small gas jets along the front of the platform to serve as footlights. You will probably find among your acquaintances a heaven-born genius, capable of painting a scene; if not, you can frame in your impromptu stage with curtains, or paper-hangings. As for the costumes, the cheapest plan for the gentlemen is to hire them from some well-known theatrical costumier; the ladies will make their own. So far as the performers are concerned, I suspect that the chief amusement of amateur theatricals lies in the preliminary preparations and the rehearsals; and for three or four weeks before the day fixed for their *débüt* their energies will be unintermitting, and will achieve the most glorious conquests over the most extraordinary difficulties.

Amateur theatricals hold an honoured place in literature. They have been chronicled by Miss Austen in her 'Mansfield Park' and by Miss Edgeworth in her 'Patronage,' to say nothing of other novelists and one or two minor poets. Miss Austen indicates a mistake into which amateurs too commonly fall, when she says, referring to her imaginary company, the Bertrams, 'No piece would be proposed that did not supply somebody with a difficulty, and on one side or the other it was a continual repetition of "Oh no, that will never do! Let us have no ranting tragedies. Too many characters—not a tolerable woman's part in the play. Anything but THAT, my dear Tom. It would be impossible to fill it up; one would not expect anybody to take such a part. I shall be happy to be of any use, but I think we could choose nothing worse."

"This will never do," said Tom Bertram at last. "We are wasting time most abominably. Something must be fixed on. No matter what, so that something is chosen. We must not be so nice; a few characters too many must not frighten us; we must *double them*."



This is a common mistake of amateurs ; they choose pieces in which the *dramatis personæ* are very numerous, forgetting that the greater the number of characters engaged the greater the amount of stage-business involved, and consequently the greater the risk of confusion and mistakes. When there are many exits and entrances, it is only the experience and coolness of the professional actor that can avoid awkward complications. I therefore cordially endorse Lady Pollock's *dictum* that 'it is in drawing-room pieces where the characters are few, where the dialogue is natural, and where the situations are either very amusing, or very interesting, that an amateur company is likely to appear to the best advantage, and under these conditions they may often afford as much entertainment as the general run of professional players ; or, even supposing them to rehearse much and carefully together and to be well-matched as to natural gifts, they may produce a more pleasing effect of harmony and grace than are often to be found at our theatres.'

In Miss Edgeworth's 'Patronage' a family called the Falconers get up an amateur dramatic performance, and through some strange mental aberration select Aaron Hill's 'Zara,' a dull and dreary version of Voltaire's 'Zaïre.' On the long-expected night, when the audience have taken their seats, they ask in whispers :—'Do you know if there is to be any clapping of hands ? Can you tell me whether it is allowable to say anything ?'

'It seems,' remarks Miss Edgeworth, 'that at some private theatres loud demonstrations of applause were forbidden. It was thought more genteel to approve and admire in silence, thus to draw the line between professional actors and actresses and gentlemen and lady performers. Upon trial, however, in some instances, it had been found that the difference was sufficiently obvious without marking it by any invidious distinction. Young and old amateurs have acknowledged that the silence, however genteel, was so dreadfully awful that they preferred even the noise of vulgar acclamations.' It is a well-known fact that judicious and cordial applause is at once a stimulus and a support to the amateur actor, and at 'private performances' such applause is not, or should not be, withheld. But signs of dissatisfaction are carefully repressed. It would be the height of rudeness to hiss a lady or gentleman who has undertaken to amuse you, even if he or she fall short in their voluntary endeavour.

The performance of 'Zara' is represented as unsuccessful, except in the acting of the heroine. 'The faults common to unpractised actors occurred. One of Osman's arms never moved, and the other sawed the air perpetually, as if in pure despite of Hamlet's prohibition. Then, in crossing over, Osman was continually entangled in Zara's robe, or, when standing still, she was obliged to twitch her train thrice before she could get it from beneath his leaden feet. When confident that he could repeat a speech fluently, he was apt to turn his back upon his mistress, or when he felt himself called upon to listen to his mistress, he would regularly turn his back upon the audience. But all these are defects permitted by the license of a private theatre, allowable by courtesy to gentlemen actors; and things went on as well as could be expected. Osman had not his part by heart, but still Zara covered all deficiencies. And Osman did no worse than other Osmans have done before him, till he came to the long speech beginning with—

"The Sultans, my great ancestors, bequeath'd  
Their empire to me, but their tastes they gave not."

Powerful prompting got him through the first six lines decently enough, till he came to—

"Wasting tenderness in wild profusion,  
I might look down to my surrounded feet  
And their contending beauties."

At this he bungled sadly, and his hearing suddenly failing as well as his memory, there was a dead stop. In vain the prompter, the scene-shifter, the candle-snuffer, as hard as they could, and much harder than they ought, reiterated the next sentence—

"I might speak  
Serenely slothful."

It was plain that Osman could not speak, nor was he "serene." He had begun, as in dangers great he was wont, to kick his left ankle-bone rapidly with his right heel; and through the pomp of Osman's oriental robes and turban, young Petcalf stood confessed. He then threw back an angry look at the prompter; Zara, terrified, gave up all for lost. The polite audience struggled not to smile. Zara, recovering her presence of mind, swept across the stage in such a manner as to hide from view her kicking Sultan; and as she passed, she whispered

the line to him so distinctly, that he caught the sound, left off kicking, went on with his speech, and all was well again. Fortunately for Zara, and for the audience, in the next scenes, the part of Lusignan was performed by a gentleman who had been well used to acting, though he was not a man of any extraordinary capacity, yet, from his *habit of the boards*, and his being perfect in his part, he now seemed quite a superior person. It was found unaccountably easier to act with this son of labour than with any other of the gentlemen performers, though they were all natural geniuses.'

To guard against such *contretemps* as are here indicated, those who enter upon an adventure in private theatricals should attend to a few plain requirements (the writer speaks from experience):

The piece chosen for performance should be adapted to the actors and to the resources of the management.

The supervision should be entrusted to a capable stage-manager, whose authority should be supreme.

Care should be taken to choose a good prompter, who should be present at all the rehearsals, so as to learn 'the business' of the piece.

The rehearsals should be numerous, and conducted seriously; every detail in the business being carefully studied and repeated until it is thoroughly known.

It should be a rule that every actor is letter-perfect by, at the latest, the third rehearsal.

A responsible person should have charge of 'the properties,' and should see that these are all ready and in order before the beginning of the performance.

It will be found convenient to print a programme, and circulate copies of it among the audience; it may be entirely plain, or as elegant as money and taste can make it.

Between the acts, or, if two or three one-act dramas are given, between the pieces, light refreshments should be handed round.

It is scarcely necessary to say, I hope, that no well-bred audience will make audible remarks on the person or costume of any of the performers, or give utterance to disagreeable criticism upon their deficiencies. It is not in the house of a friend that one should play the Censor.

Instead of a dramatic performance, tableaux may be given,

and these are preferable where the time for getting them up is limited, or difficulties may lie in the way of a resort to 'the legitimate drama.' Tableaux may be of various kinds, historical or poetical, or taken from the scene in a novel or romance; for instance, Sir Walter Raleigh spreading his traditional cloak in the mud for the behoof of Queen Elizabeth. . . Amy Robsart, Elizabeth, and the Earl of Leicester, from Scott's 'Kenilworth' . . . Gulnare in Conrad's prison, from Byron's 'Corsair' . . The return home of Olivia, from the 'Vicar of Wakefield.' . . . In George Eliot's 'Daniel Deronda,' the party at Offendene select the Statue Scene from Shakespeare's 'Winter's Tale.' But Gwendolen urged, we are told, that instead of the mere tableau, there should be just enough acting of the scene to introduce the striking up of the music as a signal for her to step down and advance; when Leontes, instead of embracing her, was to kneel and kiss the hem of her garment, and so the curtain was to fall. The ante-chamber with folding doors was specially convenient for the purposes of a stage, and the whole of the establishment, with the addition of the village carpenter, was engaged in the preparations for the entertainment.

It is interesting to refer to a tableau presented at Windsor Castle in the happier days of Queen Victoria's reign. An eyewitness thus describes it. 'Between five and six o'clock in the evening,' he says, 'he and other guests of royalty were allowed to follow the Queen and Prince Albert a long way, through one large room after another, till they came to one where hung a red curtain, which was presently drawn aside for a representation of the Four Seasons, studied and contrived by the royal children as a surprise to the Queen in celebration of the day (the anniversary of the Queen's marriage). First appeared Princess Alice as the Spring, scattering flowers and reciting verses, which were taken from Thomson's 'Seasons.' She moved gracefully, and spoke in a distinct and pleasing manner, with excellent modulation, and a tone of voice sweet and penetrating like that of the Queen. Then the curtain was drawn and the scene changed, and the Princess Royal represented Summer, with Prince Arthur stretched upon the sheaves, as if tired with the heat and harvest-work; another change, and Prince Alfred, with a crown of vine leaves and the skin of a panther, represented Autumn, looking very well. Then followed a change to a winter landscape, and the Prince of

Wales represented Winter, with a cloak covered with icicles (or what seemed such), and the Princess Louise, a charming little muffled-up figure, busy keeping up a fire, the Prince reciting (as all had done) passages more or less modified from Thomson. Then followed the last change, when all the seasons were grouped together, and far behind, on a height, appeared the Princess Helena, with a long white veil hanging on both sides down to her feet, holding a long cross, and pronouncing a blessing on the Queen and the Prince. The Princess Helena looked very charming. This was the close; but, by command of the Queen, the curtain was again withdrawn, and the guests saw the whole royal family together, who came down from their raised platform; also the baby, Prince Leopold, was carried in by his nurse, and looked at them all with big eyes, stretching out his arms to be taken by the Prince Consort.'

In the production of tableaux, the greatest attention must be paid to the grouping of figures and the harmony of colours; on these two points depends their success. When they are animated and controlled by a fine taste, their effect is charming; on the other hand, any indications of vulgarity or grotesqueness may awaken a smile when the performers wish to excite a tear.

In arranging a tableau vivant, you must manage to throw a strong stream of light on the group, leaving the room in which the spectators are assembled almost in the dark. If a lime-light be available, so much the better. To ensure a good effect, it is almost indispensable that the performers should appear on a raised platform. Any carpenter will construct this for you in a few hours, and the front of it you can ornament with drapery, and disguise with evergreens and other plants. At the back of the platform suspend some curtains or tapestry from a framework, seven or eight feet high. A proscenium can also be erected, and there *must* be some contrivance for raising and lowering a curtain of green baize, or an act-drop, which, if you like, can be appropriately painted by the young ladies of the house.

Having decided on your subject, you must direct all your energies to the making-up of suitable dresses. We have seen Night and Morning recommended as an effective tableau. Two ladies are required; one dark, the other fair. The dark one, with a black silk skirt and bodice, with arms bare, and



tresses loose, lies in a graceful, half-reclining attitude, somewhat to the left, a yard or two of black tarlatan, covered with silver paper stars, being thrown loosely over her figure. Morning, in a simple white Greek dress, with hair down, and flowers in one hand, stands somewhat to the right, about a foot farther back than Night. Morning is exposed to the lime-light, while Night remains in shadow. The Greek dress may sound formidable, but it is really extremely simple. A piece of white calico is tightly pinned round the girl (who must not have any petticoats on), over which a square of white muslin, coarse or fine, is put, which reaches from the neck to the feet. The square is made very full, say two yards wide, back and front, and joined together with a straight seam from under each arm. It buttons along the shoulders at intervals of four or five inches, falling a little over the shoulders, but leaving the arms quite bare. A narrow gold or silver braid is then passed from the back of the neck, crossed over the bosom, and going round the waist, is fastened at the back. This keeps the folds of the dress in order. A Greek dress such as this should be as limp as possible, and if kept tightly twisted up in a small coil will hang all the better when worn.

A very effective and charming tableau may be founded on Tennyson's 'Sleeping Beauty':

'There sits the butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair;  
The page has caught her hand in his:  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:  
His own are pouted to a kiss:  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.'

The various characters may be dressed in Elizabethan or any fancy costume, so long as the colours are harmoniously combined or contrasted. The grouping will need to be well studied. The butler and the steward will occupy the left hand of the stage; the page and maid-of-honour, the right hand. In the centre at the back will be revealed the Sleeping Beauty.

'Year after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purpled coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,

On either side her trancèd form  
 Forth-streaming from a braid of pearl  
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
 And moves not on the rounded curl.'

Kneeling in front of the Princess may be a page, attired in 'lustrous silks'; a maid-of-honour should stand in a graceful attitude at the head of the couch, and at the foot another should be semi-recumbent. Each character will, of course, be asleep and motionless.

The tableau may be varied by the arrival (to slow music) of the fairy Prince, charged to break the spell of slumber which for a hundred years has lain on the Beauty and her court. The Prince, needless to say, must shine in all the bravery of velvet and lace, and should be attended by his squire or equerry, who at the radiant scene before him will express the greatest admiration and surprise. We all know what happens:—

'A touch! a kiss! the charm was snapt . . .  
 . . .  
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd . . .  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd, and clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.'

'The Magic Mirror' is a good subject for a tableau. According to an old story, a prince who had had the misfortune to lose a loving, loved, and lovely bride, applied to Cornelius Agrippa, the magician, to restore her to him; and Agrippa promised to call up from the nether world all the beautiful princesses he could think of, until the missing bride was found. For this purpose a curtain of thin gauze must be raised, in front of which stand the prince and the magician. The latter waves his wand and mutters his incantations amid the vapour of some burning perfumes: a princess appears behind the curtain, pauses, looks at the prince, and on his indicating by gestures that she is not the lost bride, passes on. Another follows; a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth—as many as the managers of the tableau are able or inclined to bring forward—and at last comes the prince's bride, who stretches her arms towards him, while he, on his part, throws himself on his knees, and signifies his intense rapture. Agrippa waves his wand, and the drop descends. This tableau may be accompanied by soft music, and the final effect may be increased by bringing

on *all* the princesses, holding a wreath of flowers with which they form a semi-circle round the bride that was lost and has been found. Few tableaux afford more opportunities for picturesque dressing. Each princess may be attired in a different national costume—Greek, Italian, Mediæval French, German, Hungarian, Russian, Turkish, Hindu, and the like—or may represent historical personages—Bona of Savoy, Queen Berengaria, Mary of Guise, Lucrezia Borgia, and so on. The prince's bride, however, must be clothed in the traditional white satin. The prince himself may assume any handsome garb of the olden time which becomes him. The magician must look venerable in grey hair and a long beard, with a square velvet cap on his head; his ample robe must be covered with mystic signs, of which a hint may be gathered from Bulwer Lytton's 'Zanoni.' If the gauze be thought to obscure the view too much, a gilded oval frame—to represent a large mirror—may be substituted, and the spectator left to imagine the rest.

A variation on this tableau may be attempted in illustration of Banquo's issue from 'Macbeth' (Act iv. Scene 1):—

'Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo : down !  
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,  
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first :—  
A third is like the former. . . .

A fourth ! Start, eyes !

What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom ?

Another yet ! A seventh !—I'll see no more !'

This variation is susceptible of elaborate treatment. See also the episode in Scott's 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' where the poet-earl of Surrey sees his Geraldine in the magician's enchanted mirror.

'Love and Jealousy' may also be recommended. A cavalier, in Spanish or Italian dress, serenades with his guitar a young lady who is seen on a balcony in the centre of the stage. On the right lurks another cavalier, cloaked, with a dagger in his hand; behind him waits his attendant, with a drawn sword.

The famous duel scene in 'The Corsican Brothers' can be effectively treated as a tableau.

Or any celebrated picture may be taken as a subject, and represented in all its details, with due attention to the artistic choice of colours. Some of Mulready's or Wilkie's are especially suitable from their domestic character. Then there are

such picturesque themes as 'The Huguenots' and 'The Black Brunswicker' of Millais, 'or the 'Joan of Arc' and 'The Return from Moscow' of Calderon, or the 'Rienzi' of Holman Hunt, or 'The Signal' of J. R. Herbert. The field here indicated is practically inexhaustible ; and its cultivation will not fail to encourage the artistic sympathies both of the performers and the spectators.

I do not think I need add any more words ; nor, indeed, is it possible to supply any minute directions. All depends on the taste, dexterity, and tact of the persons engaged in getting up the tableau ; on the extent of their resources, and the skill with which these resources are employed. The chief points to be studied are the distribution of colour, the effects of light and shade, and the grouping of the various figures. No tableau should be put before the public which has not been carefully arranged and thoroughly rehearsed ; but, unfortunately, it is in this matter of rehearsals that most amateurs fail. They seem to imagine that they can attain excellence at a bound ; that their natural ability is so great as to justify their dispensing with the labour of preparation. Or while willing enough to display themselves on the stage, they are too indolent or indifferent to fit themselves by previous study. Now in all the circumstances of life, in our pastimes as in our serious avocations, the old adage holds good :—'Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.' If it be worth while to get up a tableau for the amusement of one's self and one's friends, it must or should be worth while to get it up in the best possible style. There can be no justification for inviting a large company to witness an indifferent performance ; and I can hardly conceive of a greater insult to one's friends than is contained in the by no means uncommon excuse—'Oh, we could have done it much better if we had taken more trouble !' The spirit of hospitality requires that you shall set your best before your guest.

*Charades* claim a close kinship to tableaux. They are based on the same principle ; but whereas a tableau is generally intended as the artistic presentation of a poetical or fictitious subject, a charade is usually put forward in the light of a pictorial or pantomimic puzzle, the spectators being supposed to decipher the particular word signified by the movements and gestures of

the actors. Charades are recommended by one very useful feature ; they can be got up on the spur of the moment. Half-a-dozen persons—or more or fewer—with some notion of ‘dressing-up,’ and some taste for acting, fix upon a word (of two, or at most three, syllables), which they undertake to convey to the spectators in pantomime. To each syllable is allotted a scene or tableau ; and another and final one embodies the whole word. Thus, let us suppose that the word chosen is *Honeymoon* : in Scene 1, we have, perhaps, an ‘illustrated version’ of the old nursery rhyme about the queen in her parlour eating bread and honey, with her courtiers gathered round her in an ecstasy of admiration. The king enters. His royal spouse offers a portion of her dainty ; he inquires of what it is composed, and by signs and gestures indicates his dislike of honey. The queen presses upon him ; he runs out, followed by her majesty and attendants. Scene 2 : a poet ‘by the sad sea waves’ indites an ode to the moon, figuring the most boundless enjoyment of the beauty of the night and the melody of his verses. While lost in reverie he is surrounded by robbers, who rifle him of all he has, seize his ‘Ode to the Moon’ (which is written on a tremendously big sheet of paper), manifest their scorn of it, set it on fire, and dance around the blazing manuscript, dragging the poet with them. At the end all go down on their knees to the moon, and (as in Sheridan’s ‘Critic’), *exeunt* kneeling. The 3rd and last scene may show a young husband and his bride seated at tea, in sweet companionship. The landlady enters with her bill. Pockets are turned out, but no money is forthcoming. Exit landlady in a rage, but the husband turns to his wife, and indicates that no vulgar cares of *£ s. d.* shall disturb their ‘Honeymoon.’ The audience are then requested to guess the word.

In *Acting Charades* the characters are allowed to speak, and if the performers have any *nous*, the dialogue will doubtlessly prove very funny and effective. Much amusement may also be obtained from the *dresses* in which they appear, as these are generally ‘adapted for the occasion’ from such materials as the lady of the house can place at the disposal of her histrionic friends. Sometimes, however, acting charades are elaborately worked-up as a recognised portion of the evening’s entertainment ; a libretto being written, the various parts learned and rehearsed, and the dresses manipulated with in-



geniuity and taste. When there is a fund of musical talent to be drawn upon, songs may be introduced, and musical accompaniments used to enhance the effect of the action. Occasionally scenery is prepared, and the acting charade may then be regarded as a modest, prosaic revival of the masques which delighted our Elizabethan forefathers—which

‘So did take Eliza and our James.’

‘The masque, says Gifford, as it attained its highest degree of excellence in the hands of Ben Jonson, admitted of dialogue, singing, and dancing, which were not independent of one another, as in previous entertainments, but combined, by the introduction of some ingenious fable, into an harmonious whole. The groundwork was assumed at will; but Ben Jonson, to whom the whole mythology of Greece and Rome lay open, generally drew his personages from that inexhaustible treasury of fancy: having formed the plan, he called in the aid of the sister arts; for ‘the essence of the masque was pomp and glory, and it could breathe only in the atmosphere of a court.’ Thus, while the dramas of Shakespeare were produced without any scenic embellishment, movable scenery of the costliest and most elaborate kind was lavished on the masque, and the highest vocal and instrumental excellence was employed to grace and recommend it.

I see no reason why the masque should not be reproduced by some ambitious host or hostess desirous of investing their entertainments with an air of novelty. It was often animated by a strain of pure poetry, and lent itself, as we know, to beautiful effects of grouping and colouring. The scenic contrivances are sometimes too elaborate for the amateur stage; but with a little ingenuity these might be modified, and the masque so rearranged as to be brought within the limit of available resources. There would be no difficulty, for instance, in putting upon the drawing-room ‘boards’ Ben Jonson’s masque of ‘Christmas,’ or of ‘The Golden Age Restored,’ or some of Shelley’s masques, or Milton’s ‘Comus,’ and these would suggest imitations which, if inferior to the originals in poetic grace, might please, nevertheless, by their fancifulness or picturesque charm.

‘Five o’clock teas’ are a recent innovation, and belong to the category of the ladies’ social pleasures. They have been

rendered necessary, or excusable, perhaps, by the late hour to which the dinner in fashionable households is now deferred. I am not aware that any particular etiquette surrounds them. As they are not regarded as 'a meal,' visitors do not remove their out-of-door garments. A small tea-service, specially designed for five o'clock teas, is always used. At large 'five o'clock teas' the hostess receives her guests at the open door of the drawing-room, and has as little time to bestow upon each as at a ball or an 'at home;' but if the party be small, not exceeding twenty or thirty guests, she receives them in the drawing-room, approaching each new-comer as she is announced, and allotting to each a few minutes of pleasant conversation. It is on these occasions that a hostess has an opportunity of winning her laurels—of proving herself competent for her position—of bringing into play all her highest social qualifications. Almost any person can get through the formalities of a large ball or 'at home;' but in a small party everything hangs upon the tact, talent, and grace of the hostess.

'Garden-parties' afford a very agreeable pretext for collecting one's friends and acquaintances; but certain conditions seem essential to their success. The garden must be of tolerable extent, and the weather propitious. A garden-party on a fine warm day, with a blue sky above, and the blossoming flower-beds shining in the sun's golden light, is one of the pleasantest of ré-unions; just as a garden-party in the rain and mist is one of the most depressing. At garden-parties morning-dress is worn; they are very popular among young people on account of the opportunities they afford for quiet flirtations. What sweet nothings may be whispered into willing ears while the band is playing the love-strains in Gounod's 'Faust!' What delicate attentions may be paid by courteous swain when Araminta exhibits her skill with bow and arrow! How lithe and graceful the figure of the fair Julia appears while she strives for victory at lawn-tennis! Sunshine and the fresh air, green leaves and bright blossoms, blue skies and warm breezes—these seem the natural surroundings of youth and beauty; and a garden-party on a glowing summer noon seems like a page out of a poem, and reminds us of the romances of the old chivalry and the bright scenes in Boccaccio's 'Decameron.'

'It was a garden plot of the most emerald verdure, bouquets of laurel and of myrtle opened on either side into vistas half-

overhung with clematis and rose, through whose arcades the prospect closed with statues and gushing fountains ; in front, the lawn was bounded by rows of vases on marble pedestals filled with flowers ; and broad and gradual flights of steps of the whitest marble led from terrace to terrace, each adorned with statues and fountains, half way down a high but softly-sloping and verdant hill. . . . Birds of every hue and song, some free, some in network of golden wire, warbled round ; and upon the centre of the sward reclined five ladies, unmasked and richly dressed, the eldest of whom seemed scarcely more than twenty, and five cavaliers, young and handsome, whose jewelled vests and golden chains attested their degree. Wines and fruits were on a low table beside, and musical instruments, chess-boards, and gammon-tables lay scattered all about.'

This is a modern novelist's reproduction of a mediæval garden-party ; but in recent seasons it has been put to shame by the graceful and glittering pageants which have lit up some of our English gardens. Their increasing popularity may be noted with satisfaction, for it seems to show that not even Fashion can deaden the love of nature and of outdoor amusements which has always been a passion with our race.

Garden-parties, lawn-tennis-parties, archery-parties, croquet-parties—these are amusements which cannot be too warmly encouraged, if for no other reason than that they are certainly more healthful than large gatherings in heated rooms, and that they offer a more vigorous and wholesome means *pour passer le temps*. Matinées, like garden-parties, require good weather to make them a success ; and then, as an assemblage of well-dressed people listening, among flowers and sunshine, to merry music, or merrier conversation, a matinée is not one of the least agreeable occasions in the history of 'the season.' The hostess who ventures upon one must secure the services of a good band, and provide ample refreshments, or a lunch, in a tent or summer-house on the lawn. There her duties end ; for introductions are not usual at a matinée, and the guests are expected to amuse themselves, which, in the circumstances, they may very well do, and find no difficult task. The hour at which they assemble is generally one or two, and they withdraw about five. Of course, each visitor pays his or her respects to the hostess ; but this ceremony over, the guests are left to their own devices.

At croquet-parties, which generally begin about three, it is, of course, absolutely necessary to introduce your guests to one another, as a preliminary to making up the necessary couples. Full morning-dress is worn on these occasions, but in the country considerable latitude is allowed in the matter of toilettes, and a young lady is free to exercise her taste and ingenuity in inventing a becoming costume.

'Kettledrums' are not so popular as they were. At these entertainments tea and coffee are served at about five o'clock. The dress is morning-dress. Any person on the hostess's visiting-list may attend without invitation. Dancing lasts until seven o'clock, when the guests disperse for dinner. The giddy round of fashionable society is something almost too awful for the contemplation of ordinary mortals! Thus it is quite possible for a young lady to begin the day at a garden-party, next partake of five o'clock tea, afterwards be present at a kettledrum, thence betake herself to a dinner-party, look in at the Opera, and finish at a ball! What time is left her for intellectual culture, or for the discharge of domestic duties, deponent knoweth not. Such a life appears as laborious as any artisan's, but thousands appear to like it.

In the country, a popular out-of-door diversion is a picnic, and, though the light shafts of the humourist have often been aimed at it, there is enough of real enjoyment and mirthfulness in it to justify its preservation. For a picnic, as for a garden-party, the primary condition of success is fine weather. Next, the guests should all know one another, and should all be chosen for their agreeable qualities. An ill-tempered person at a picnic is as much out of place as an elephant in a china-shop! There should be a fair admixture of seniors to ensure order and decorum, but there should be a preponderance of young people—of young men, well-bred, well-mannered, and accomplished; of young girls, comely, intelligent, and agreeable. If among them there should be one or two couples with a marked preference for each other's society, all the better; they will set an example to the rest which [in due time may bear fruit. It is necessary, however, to remind young cavaliers and their lady-loves that their mutual attentions should not be too conspicuous, and that they should not be so absorbed in one another as to forget the courtesies due to their companions. A fine day and a nicely-assorted party, and you have the two

main elements of a successful picnic. Of course your outing will be directed to some pretty and sufficiently-retired spot, where you may enjoy your *al fresco* repast without the disturbing accompaniment of a crowd of curious spectators. Equally, of course, you will be careful to provide an ample supply of refreshments. When a picnic is made up by two or three parties, each contributes an equal portion of the expenses. Few if any servants should be called into requisition on these occasions, when society makes, as it were, an effort to emancipate itself from its own conventionalities. A picnic is not a *fête champêtre*, but a merry out-of-door expedition, with pleasure for its object and freedom for its inspiring principle. The presence of John Thomas with his calves, or Simmons the butler with his white necktie, is a delusion and a snare, and unpleasantly recalls the thralldom in which Fashion condemns her votaries to live. No ; at a picnic be your own servants ; or, rather, impose on the gentlemen a duty they will surely regard as a privilege, that of ministering to the wants of their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts, and 'those others,' who, if not nearer, are, perhaps, dearer.

Some hints may here be added as to the fitting materials for that 'cold collation' which is an indispensable adjunct of croquet-parties, garden-parties, and the like.

*Imprimis*, in the first place, nothing should appear at a collation which requires carving or cannot be easily helped. All meat dishes should be either sandwiches, which can be eaten in the hand, or minced meat in balls, which can be eaten with a fork only. There may be slices of meat, however, and a salad.

As everything is designed for the comfort of the guests, and no bill of fare can be put forward, it has been recommended that the name of the preparation should be neatly written, and pasted on to the edge of the dish. Mistakes will thus be avoided, and persons prevented from committing themselves to the mastication of some distasteful viand.

All the puddings should be of small size, the tarts must be tartlets, the jellies in glasses, the custards in little cups. This arrangement will facilitate the labours of the non-professional butlers and amateur footmen.

A good authority writes : If you have apples, they must have been boiled with sugar, lemon-juice, and lemon-peel, and



turned out of small tea-cups—a refreshing and savoury preparation, especially if iced. If you have oranges, treat them as follows : Cut a hole in the golden fruit as big as a fourpenny piece where the stem grew. Scoop out the inside, taking care to touch the rind as little as possible. Put all the oranges on a dish with the holes upwards ; and having made a highly-flavoured orange jelly, strain it, and fill all the skins of the fruit. When cold, cut the oranges in quarters, and so serve them.

For croquet-parties, what are called (on the *lucus à non lucendo* principle) ‘croquet-eggs’ may be commended. Have by you some good *blanc-mange* or a lemon-cream. Take a number of oval patty-pans, and into each put a round ball of wood, like a small croquet-ball, which has been bored, and the bored part of which has been filled up with lead to keep it steady. Pour the lemon-cream into the patty-pans. When it is cold, uncover the balls, and pour into the vacant spaces a strong-coloured jelly made of curaçoa. The appearance of a poached egg is thus obtained, and the croquet-player furnished with a wholesome and agreeable stimulant.

The following remarks do not, of course, apply to an impromptu picnic, but only to entertainments where a cold collation can be set out on a table and under shelter :

‘When people enter the room where the cold collation is spread, the first impression ought to call up thoughts of fairy-land. It has to stand the trial of sunlight, which is a serious ordeal. Take my advice, and do not be anxious to exhibit your silver. It is almost ugly by daylight. Keep to glass, which, for the purpose of a cold daylight repast, is far prettier. I would say, always prefer beauty to display. The coloured china shell-dishes, ornamented with red coral and seaweed, are very pretty by daylight, and by lamplight of doubtful loveliness ; but pink glass is always pretty, and alternate dishes of pink and of white glass have an excellent effect. A good deal of thought may be well bestowed on the things to go into each, and on the quantity and colour of the flowers that are to be used.

‘Large growing plants, if in luxurious flower, and little fruit-trees from an orchid-house, look very well down the middle of a long table at collation ; and if biscuits of many sorts are put down the table on each side at regular distances, in small saucer-shaped glass dishes, which are placed in other glass dishes a size larger, and the space between filled closely with

flowers of one sort, the effect of such coloured fairy rings all down the table is very good. These rings might be alternately pink rose-buds and the large blue forget-me-not.'

At a picnic never use your best plate, glass, or china ; so shall you avoid much heart-burning and irritation of temper. It is not easy for a lady to be 'mistress of herself though china fall,' if the china be Sèvres or Dresden. All that is required at a picnic is cleanliness and neatness ; any ostentatious effort, or attempt to outvie one's neighbours, is as fatal to success as it is contrary to the laws of good manners.

The humours of a picnic have been satirised by many pens, and in one of Mr. H. J. Byron's plays have been transferred to the stage ; yet this old English institution defies attack, and thrives in perennial prosperity. Shall there be no more cakes and ale because thou art fastidious ? Aye, and pigeon-pie shall be good in the mouth too, and claret-cup shall be drunk with avidity, and tarts and pâtés shall minister to the enjoyment of fair maidens. The truth is, the ridicule does not stick, because it is spent upon an exaggeration. There are failures in picnics as there are in Swinburne's erotics and Burne Jones's ideals. The mustard *does* sometimes get into the raspberry tart, and picnic parties *do* sometimes forget the corkscrew. But the majority, I suspect, are well conducted, and the many pleasant recollections attaching to pleasant picnics maintain their popularity. For my own part, I claim for them a picturesque element. A picnic on the velvety slope of a green lawn extending to the margent of the Upper Thames, say in the neighbourhood of Cliefden's bowers ; or in a highland glen, where tall pine-trees spread their fragrant foliage, and clear burns leap noisily down the rugged sides of the mountain ; or among the perfumed hay-mows of some sunny Midland meadow ; or in the cool shady hollow of a Sussex down ; or among the ferns of a quiet Devonshire combe opening out upon the glorious sea—can you desire a more joyous pastime ? The sunlit air ; the blue arch above ; the cool green foliage around ; the songs of birds and the murmurs of the wind ; the clear ringing laughter of happy voices ; the flash and gleam of bright eyes ; the grace of shapely forms—do not these combine in one overpowering charm ? And surely nowhere else, and at no other time, does so much poetry surround a meal. The cold fowls undergo a kind of exaltation ; the salad seems

somehow glorified ; the tongue receives a special consecration ; the wines acquire an additional zest and sparkle. For sweet smiles mingle with bright sunbeams, and soft whispers with the melodies of thrush and blackbird ; and there is around you the glamour of a vision of fair creatures in brightly-tinted raiment ; and all blends into an enchanting phantasmagoria of light and music and love.

Let no ill-words be spoken of picnics, except by cynics who hate their kind. Given a fine summer day, and a pretty rural nook, and a skilfully selected company—not so numerous as to preclude the growth and expansion of a common feeling of friendship and a mutual sympathy, nor so small as to prevent the exhibition of those contrasts of taste and disposition which are essential to harmony—and I know of no pleasanter form of social reunion. As I have said, a picnic has its humorous side, of which our comic writers have made the most ; but is it the worse for that ? Shall we not laugh and be merry ? Shall we not make a jest of our little failures ? Must perfection be associated with a picnic because of the alliteration ? Do we not wisely in relieving the more serious scenes of life by an occasional bit of comedy ? Go, youth ; make the most of your time : cultivate the picnic, and take care that Amaryllis shares it with you.

When at last the hurly-burly is done, when the stress and struggle are over, when the London season is at an end, and Parliament has ceased its debates, and the Ladies' Mile no longer exhibits its moving galaxy of equestrians, and the West End shop-keepers are counting up their spoils, and thinking how much greater the amount would have been but for the 'co-operative stores,' then the great question comes up before us : Where shall we spend the autumn ? We cannot all of us circumnavigate the globe in a steam-yacht, or seek health and enjoyment in the Engadine ; we do not all of us care for Harrogate or Scarborough, Brighton or Ryde ; and yet Fashion forbids that we should stay at home. The opportunity thus seems to have come for a circle of visits to our country friends ; that is, if we are fortunate enough to have a sufficient number on our list. We must begin by fixing the various stages of our journey : the Blanks in Hampshire, the Dashes in Devonshire, the Smiths among the Yorkshire wolds, the Browns near the Lancashire coast, the McRobinsons among the Scottish

Highlands. To some of these, perhaps, we have only general invitations ; which we have, therefore, to exercise a little ingenuity to get converted into invitations at fixed dates and for definite periods. Our next care must be to arrange them in chronological and topographical order : that is, if possible, in such wise that we can go from one to the other without crossing the same ground, and without leaving between any of them a gap of unoccupied time. This is always a difficult task ; some of the friends whom we may offer to visit, on the strength of a previously expressed wish, may be unable to receive us at the date that would be most convenient to ourselves ; they may be going from home, or their house may already be filled, or there may be illness in the family. We must do the best we can ; arrange our pieces on the board with all our skill, and trust to fortune for a good issue to the game. When a friend's roof is not available, we must fix on some point at a convenient proximity to our next place of rest, and retire into lodgings, or 'put up' at an hotel, until the hiatus is passed over.

If the hostess whom we are about to visit have not, when writing, mentioned the most convenient train or steamer, it will be as well we should name the hour at which we propose to arrive. It is not customary now for hosts to send to the railway station for their friends ; and, therefore, if we are strangers in the locality, we write or telegraph to the hotel-keeper or cab-proprietor to have ready 'a fly' for our use. To be deposited at a country station with a pile of luggage, and no vehicle to receive it or its owners, is one of those 'miseries of human life' which are more easily imagined than described. I have said a pile of luggage ; of course, if the visitor be a gentleman, a portmanteau of moderate size will contain all his belongings ; but if he be accompanied by a lady, his portmanteau will be supplemented by one or two capacious trunks. For his companion will want a thick walking-dress for rural expeditions, a morning dress of light and airy texture, a dress for lawn-tennis, another for a possible garden-party, besides visiting-dresses, dinner-dresses, and ball or evening-party dresses. These *impedimenta* cannot be disposed of in a hat-box ! If the round of visits is likely to be prolonged into the colder months of autumn, it is an excellent thing to pack a box before leaving home with suitable warm raiment, for which you can send when wanted.

Both for their own sakes, and that of their hosts, guests should arrive, if possible, a sufficient time before dinner to allow of changing their dress without delaying that meal ; and when they leave, they should not choose an exceptionally early hour of the morning. Only 'urgent circumstances' can justify a man in rousing his host's household in order that he may catch an eight o'clock express. A guest should accept the rules and conditions of the house at which he visits, and not expect to carry his own little habits and personal regulations wherever he goes. It is courteous, after having spent some days at a friend's, to write to the hostess from the next place you visit, announcing your safe arrival, and gracefully alluding to the pleasant sojourn you made under her hospitable roof.

Do not out-stay your welcome. It is better to leave even a day before, rather than a day after, the one fixed for the expiry of your visit. You are bound to consider your host's convenience as well as your own, and not to treat his house as if it were an hotel, with the sole exception that you have not to pay hotel charges.

Do not occupy too much of the time of your entertainers. Remember that they have their daily duties to discharge—letters to answer, servants to superintend, their estate, perhaps, to overlook—and that their discharge of these duties cannot be interrupted without serious inconvenience. After breakfast, retire to your own room, or go for a ramble in the neighbourhood, or, if you be a disciple of Izaak Walton, shoulder your rod and hie away to the nearest stream—unless, indeed, some excursion has been arranged for your special benefit, or your host or hostess invites your company. Your afternoons should also be your own, and then you will appear at dinner fresh and unwearied—prepared to enjoy the society of your host and his family, while to them your company will not be the less acceptable because it has not been inflicted upon them all day. You must be possessed of infinite resource if you can undertake to amuse anybody hour after hour—all day long—and day after day for a week or a fortnight. I suppose Damon would have been sick of Pythias if he had been condemned to see him every day from breakfast until supper. Absence makes the heart of host and guest grow fonder ; they *relish* one another all the better for an interval of separation.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF DINNERS.

'Now good digestion wait on appetite,  
And health on both.'

SHAKESPEARE.

Importance of Dinner—Napoleon's Estimate of it—Political Opportunities—Royal Academy Dinner—Macaulay's Account of it—Macaulay's own Dinners—Days of the First Empire—Baron Bunsen at Windsor—Dining-room—Its Furniture and Appointments—Cheerfulness, Light, and Comfort—Decoration—Mrs. Gaskell—Flowers and Crystal—Mrs. Loftie—Napkins—Archbishop Whately—Against undue Display—Colonel Hauer's Dinner to the Prince Regent—Number of Guests—Mrs. Gaskell on Waiting and Mutual Assistance—Its Disadvantages—Forms of Invitation and Reply—Selection of Guests—Pendennis at a Dinner in Paternoster Row—Arrangement of Guests—Particulars of Precedence—Reception of Guests—Places at Table—Old-fashioned Carving—Rôle of the Hostess—The Menu, or Bill of Fare—Proportion, not Excess—Elegance, not Ostentation—Examples of Bills of Fare, according to number of Guests and Seasons of the Year—Moderation in Wine—Wines and their Order—Wine-drinking, Past and Present—Minute Vulgarisms—Punctuality—Further Caveats against Vulgarity—Value of Observation—Conversation at Dinner—Good Conversation demands Good Talking and Good Listening—Dr. Johnson—Suppression and Delicacy in Conversation—Cowper on 'Conversation'—Topics of Conversation—Lord Beaconsfield's 'Lothair'—Joining the Ladies—Mrs. Haweis on the Dinner of To-day—Most Dinners are Failures—Guests to be preferred to the Dinner.



COMPLETE system of literature revolves around the vast central subject of DINNER, and the reader who should attempt to master it would spend laborious days and sleepless nights, only to find, after years of toil, that he had made but small progress towards the desired goal. Of what dinner should consist—how it should be ordered—the number of guests—the con-

ditions under which it should be given and eaten—the decorations of the table—the furniture of the dining-room—these are only a few of the subsidiary topics on which a thousand writers have lavished their wit and wisdom. Evidently, in the opinion of a very considerable portion of civilised humanity, the art of living is simply and absolutely the art of dining. I suppose that these *Cænophilists* recognise breakfast as a necessity, and give an occasional thought to luncheon, perhaps to supper; but it is the one great and sublime meal of dinner for which they think and feel, hope and fear, and live. Dynasties may pass away, and empires crumble into ruin—these are the trifling accidents of the world's history; but dinner! it is to them what the philosopher's stone was to the Rosicrucian students of the Middle Ages, or even more. They prepare for it laboriously; enjoy it devoutly; and ruminate over it profoundly. No doubt they adopt the glowing eloquence of Pelham, when he expatiates to Lord Gulo-ton on its surpassing importance:—‘At what moment of our existence are we happier than at table? There hatred and animosity are lulled to sleep, and pleasure alone reigns. There the cook, by his skill and attention, anticipates our wishes in the happiest selection of the best dishes and decorations. There our wants are satisfied, our minds and bodies invigorated, and ourselves qualified for the high delights of love, music, poetry, dancing, and other pleasures.’ They are of the opinion of Suffren, the French diplomatist, who, when in India, was waited upon by a deputation of Hindoos while he was at dinner:—‘Tell them,’ he said, ‘that the Christian religion peremptorily forbids every Christian, while at table, to occupy himself with any earthly subject except the function of eating.’ There is *no* earthly subject which concerns them so deeply—which occupies so much of their time and attention.

I do not write for such enthusiasts; yet I am by no means disposed to make light of dinner. We do not live to eat, but we eat to live, and it is, therefore, a matter of personal interest to each of us *what* we eat and *how* we eat it; and dinner being our principal meal, must necessarily demand our best consideration. Nor can it be denied that dinner has a certain social value and interest. Napoleon recognised this fact, and selected Cambacérès as Third Consul, because he understood the science of dinner-giving, and confirmed adherents and conciliated

opponents by the excellence of his *rôtis* and the savouriness of his *plats*. But for Lady Holland's famous dinners at Holland House, what would have become of the Whig party during the long period it spent in the cold shade of Opposition? In our own time, we have heard something of the political success of the late Countess Waldegrave's dinners at Strawberry Hill, and it is generally admitted that the politician who keeps a good cook is a tower of strength to his party. Literature, too, has many grateful associations with dinners; from those at which the Queen Anne wits and poets assisted, down to those which called forth the humour of Sydney Smith and the varied knowledge of Macaulay. I suppose that English art would hardly hold its place if the annual Royal Academy dinner passed into abeyance! What wit and eloquence and epigrammatic wisdom—what stores of anecdote and experience—have been poured out at the dinner-table! What jealousies have been soothed, what combinations arranged or neutralised, what hostilities averted, what friendships cemented! Who has not read of dinners at which he would have given half his income to have been present? Who would not have wished to dine with Shakespeare and Ben Jonson at the Mermaid? or with Addison and Swift at Treasurer Harley's? or with Johnson and Beauclerk and Bennet Langton and Miss Burney at Mr. Thrale's? or with Macaulay and Luttrell and Sydney Smith at Rogers's? or with Coleridge at Mr. Gillman's? or with Charles Lamb and George Dyer in Elia's pleasant Highgate retreat? I have just alluded to the Royal Academy dinners; that must have been a particularly rememberable one which Macaulay describes in his diary in 1852:—

'A great number of my friends, and immense smiling, and shaking of hands. I got a seat in a pleasant situation near Thesiger, Hallam, and Inglis. The scene was lively . . . It is the old Duke's birthday; he is eighty-three to-day. I never see him now without a painful interest. I look at him every time with the thought that this may be the last. We drank his health with immense shouting and table-banging. He returned thanks, and spoke of the loss of the *Birkenhead*. I remarked (and Lawrence, the American minister, said that he had remarked the same thing) that, in his eulogy of the poor fellows who were lost, the Duke never spoke of their courage, but always of their discipline and subordination. He repeated it

several times over. The courage, I suppose, he treated as a thing of course. Lord Derby spoke with spirit, but with more hesitation than on any occasion on which I have heard him. Disraeli's speech was clever. In defiance of all rule, he gave Lord John Russell's health. Lord John answered good-humouredly and well.'

Here I may refer to Macaulay in his capacity not of diner-out but of dinner-giver; and I am inclined to believe that in many respects he was the very type of a perfect Amphitryon. His nephew and biographer says, that moderate as was his own *régime*, he could not endure to see guests, even of the most tender age, seated round his board, unless there was upon it something very like a feast. 'He generally selected, by a half-conscious preference, dishes of an established, and, if so it may be called, an historical reputation. He was fond of testifying to his friendliness for Dissenters by treating his friends to a fillet of veal, which he maintained to be the recognised Sunday dinner in good old Nonconformist families. He liked still better to prove his loyalty to the Church by keeping her feasts, and keeping them in good company; and by observing her fasts, so far, that is to say, as they could be observed by making additions to the ordinary bill of fare. A Michaelmas Day on which he did not eat goose, or ate it in solitude, was no Michaelmas to him; and regularly on Christmas Eve there came to our house a cod-fish, a barrel of oysters, and a chine, accompanied by the heaviest turkey which diligence could discover and money could purchase. If he was entertaining a couple of schoolboys who could construe their fourth satire of Juvenal, he would reward them for their proficiency with a dish of mullet that might have passed muster on the table of an augur or an Emperor's freedman . . . With regard to the contents of his cellar, Macaulay prided himself on being able to say with Mr. John Thorpe (in Miss Ferrier's novel of "Marriage"), "Mine is famous good stuff, to be sure;" and if my mother took him to task for his extravagance, he would reply, in the words used by another of their favourite characters in fiction, that there was a great deal of good eating and drinking in seven hundred a year, if people knew how to manage it.'

Macaulay, who read everything, had read the *Almanach des Gourmands*—that cyclopædia of sensual enjoyment—and had by heart the choice morsels of humour and extravagance scat-

tered through the eight fat little volumes. He loved to dwell on the ceremonies of a Parisian banquet in the days of the First Empire, from those complexities of arrangement, 'que les personnes bien avisées ont l'attention d'abrégé en mettant d'avance le nom de chaque convive sur chaque couvert, dans l'ordre de leur appétit connu ou présumé,' to the 'visite de digestion' on the morrow, the length of which was or ought to be proportioned to the excellence of the entertainment. He would enumerate every article in a long series of delicacies, from the 'potage brulant, tel qu'il doit être,' on to the 'biscuit d'ivrogne,' not forgetting to emphasise the assertion that, 'Tout bon mangeur a fini son dîner après le roti.' He would quote from the same high authority that, after the sixth dozen, oysters ceased to whet the appetite; and would repeat, with evident relish, the sentence that closes the description of a repast such as a French official, in the days spoken of, delighted in giving:—'Ceux qui veulent faire grandement les choses, finissent par parfumer la bouche de leurs convives (ou plutôt de leurs amis, car c'est ainsi que s'appellent les convives d'un déjeuner), avec deux ou trois tasses de glaces; ou de la mise ensuite avec un grand verre de marasquin; et puis chacun se retire en hâte chez soi—pour aller manger la soupe.' But his favourite passage, we are told, was that which prescribes the period (varying from a week to six months, according to the goodness of the dinner), during which the guests may not speak ill of their host; who has, moreover, the privilege of binding their tongues afresh to silence by issuing a new set of invitations before the full time has expired:—'On conviendra que, de toutes les manières d'empêcher de mal parler de soi, celle-ci n'est pas la moins admirable.'

In Baron Bunsen's letters we meet with some brief notes on dinners in high places, notably at Windsor Castle. Thus he writes on one occasion: 'I had my audience at eight o'clock, just before dinner: I was directed to conduct the Duchess of Kent to the place opposite the Queen, and then to place myself at the Queen's right hand. I had been told by Brunnow that I had no choice of a place but by the side of the Duchess or Prince Albert. In obeying the Queen's command, I thought of what the Popes say when receiving peculiar honour—"Non mihi sed Petro," "Not to me is this offered, but to St. Peter"—well aware that it is the King [of Prussia]'s



present high position which has raised mine ; wherefore I can really enjoy it much. We passed a cheerful evening. In playing at cards with the Queen, I won a *new shilling* of her Majesty's especial coin.' Again he writes : ' I arrived here yesterday at six, and at eight o'clock all followed the Queen in to dinner in the great hall hung round with the Winterhalter portraits. The band, so placed as to be invisible, played exquisitely, so that what with the fine proportions of the hall and the well-subdued light, and the splendour of the plate and decorations, the scene was such as fairy tales present ; and Lady Canning, Miss Dawson, and Miss Stanley were beautiful enough to personate the ideal attendants of an ideal court. The Queen looked well and *rayonnante*, with that expression which she always has when thoroughly pleased with all that occupies her mind, which you know I always observe with delight, as fraught with that truth and reality which so essentially belong to her character, and so strongly distinguish her countenance, in all its changes, from the *fixed mask* only too common in the royal rank of society.'

But we must come to more practical matters. You and I, my friend, are never likely to be entertained at Windsor, and yet we have sometimes to go to dinners and to give dinners. In either capacity, as host or guest, we are interested in all that appertains to reasonable success in this department. And obviously, the first consideration is the room in which the dinner is given and eaten—the dining-room. I have already spoken of the old style of dining-room in houses even of some pretension : the crimson flock-paper, the dull mahogany table, and duller chairs, and dullest sideboard—the long array of guests on either side staring, in the intervals of repast, at the hideous portraits in heavy gilded frames suspended from the walls—the general air of gloom and desolation, as if, instead of a social gathering, a scene from some grim *Walpurgis-Nacht* was going on—everybody knows it, and the shudder with which he was wont to contemplate it. *Nous avons changé tout cela*. We don't think it necessary in those more enlightened days to surround our little entertainments with an air of funereal melancholy, and to chill our guests to the marrow-bones by way of set-off to the viands and wines they cost us ! The very first condition of a proper dining-room is that it shall be light and cheerful. You may paint or paper its walls according to

the latest eccentricity of the art-craze, so long as you provide these two essentials. As for the furniture, let it be comfortable ; let the table be large enough to accommodate yourself and your guests with ease, and let the chairs be chairs meant for Christian men and women to *sit in*, not to *look at*. I am not concerned as to the style of furniture which your carefully cultivated æstheticism may incline you to adopt—Wardour Street Gothic, Queen Anne, or Louis Quatorze—so long as it is all in harmony, and all selected with a view to convenience and comfort. Let the curtains at your windows be graceful in folds, harmonious in colouring, and of a texture to suit the season. Take care that your room is well ventilated, cool in summer, pleasantly warm in winter, and always fresh and wholesome. Who can eat one's dinner with any appetite in an atmosphere choked with gas and coal-dust? Who can eat it when the air breathes as fiercely hot as that of the Arabian Desert? Or, on the other hand, when one is exposed in winter to a temperature that suggests ideas of Nova Zembla? And this, too, perhaps, when one's opposite neighbour, seated near the fire, is dissolving in an agony of perspiration? To sum up : while you will certainly wish your dining-room to display the good taste of its owner, you will not forget that your duty as a host demands that it should be arranged with a primary view to the ease of your guests.

I presume that your table will be oval—experience has proved the advantage of this shape over the rectangular parallelogram which used to do duty in the dining-rooms of the fine old English gentlemen. There is no reason in the world why it should differ from the tables used in other parts of the house, so long as it is steady and substantial. And here I may enter a protest against the notion that 'the dining-room' must, for occult reasons never explained by any writer I have ever met with, be as unlike as possible to every other room ; why the carpet and paper must be of a different pattern and the furniture in a different style ; and every sign and token be grouped together in order to impress on the spectator's mind the all-important fact that '*ici on dine !*' As I have already insisted, the only necessary conditions are light and cheerfulness, which include, of course, the requirements of space and ventilation. A man receives his guests as his friends, not as if he were offering them a public dinner at so much per head, 'including wines,'

and should, therefore, receive them in the most comfortable room in his house, the one which is cheeriest, prettiest, and most convenient. I abominate your show dining-rooms, those elaborately 'got-up' salons, which you feel, immediately on entering, are reserved for special occasions and never occupied by your host and his family. They are wholly antagonistic to the true idea of dinner as an occasion for cementing friendships, promoting 'the flow of reason,' and strengthening the bonds of social good-will.

You will cover your table with the whitest of white damask, damask as spotless as the memory of 'the lily-maid of Astolat,' and for decoration you will use flowers profusely, always taking care that the profusion be governed by good taste. An epergne or two is admissible, if not too high or too large; and a statuette in white alabaster or Parian, with a background of glossy foliage, forms an attractive object. Small glass dishes filled with flowers, and placed at the corners and down the sides of the tables are very pleasant, and invest with something of poetic grace the material character of all gastronomic pleasures. It is unnecessary to say that the flowers should be fresh cut, if possible, and arranged with a due attention to harmony of colours. A small table-fountain, filled with perfumed water, may be made 'a thing of beauty.' Here and there distribute some ferns or tiny evergreens. Do not make a display of plate—a gentleman's dinner-table is not to resemble a silver-smith's counter. Let there be abundance of 'crystal'—glass plates, dishes, vases, tumblers, wine-glasses, ewers; and let each be selected for its graceful outline, inasmuch as the primary principle of 'laying a table' is, or should be, to present nothing which shall not please the eye. On this point I agree with Mrs. Gaskell when she says:—'If your friends have not dined, and it suits you to give them a dinner, in the name of Lucullus let them dine; but take care that there shall be something besides the mere food and wine to make their foregathering agreeable at the time and pleasant to remember, otherwise you had better pack up for each his portion of the dainty dish and send it separately, in hot-water trays, so that he can eat comfortably behind a door, like Sancho Panza, and have done with it.' There is nothing more pleasant than blooming flowers, cool green ferns, and finely-cut glass: these charm the eye and delight the mind by their suggestion of pretty and poetical

fancies. Do not resort to hot-house flowers, if you can help it ; in spring, violets, primroses, lilies of the valley, cowslips ; in summer, roses, pinks, pansies, sweet-william, clematis ; you need never be at a lack for the darlings of the valley and the meadow, or the pride of the cottage-garden, the blossoms redolent with the sweetness of old English poetry and fable.

And here we may quote Mrs. Gaskell again :—

‘My friends,’ she said, ‘would probably be surprised (some wear caps and some wigs) if I provided them with garlands of flowers after the manner of the ancient Greeks ;\* but put flowers on the table (none of your shams, wax or otherwise ; I prefer an honest wayside root of primroses in a common vase of white ware to the grandest bunch of stiff-rustling artificial rarities in a silver epergne). A flower or two by the side of each person’s plate would not be out of the way as to expense, and would be a very agreeable pretty piece of mute welcome. Flowers as an ornament lead our thoughts away from their present beauty and fragrance. I am almost sure Madame de Sablé, a Parisian ‘woman of fashion’ in the seventeenth century, had flowers in her salon, and, as she was fond of dainties herself, I can fancy her smooth benevolence of character taking delight in some personal preparations made in the morning for the anticipated friends of the evening. I can fancy her stewing sweetbreads in a silver saucepan or dressing salad with her delicate, plump white hands.’

Mrs. Loftie lays great stress on the necessity of ‘fair napkins,’ and adds that in these there is great room for variety and art-needlework. It is very rarely, she says, that we see a pretty set. Too often the guest is presented with a large square of damask like a deal-board, stiffened in order that the butler may torture it into a fantastic shape. ‘A napkin that is not soft and pliable is manifestly unfit for its purpose, that of wiping the mouth. It should not be too broad, but long enough to go over the knees. It may be elaborately ornamented, but not so as to prevent it from being easily washed. In countries where fingers still do the duty of forks the napkin holds a very high position as a criterion of the rank and riches of the master of the house. It is a great pity that in this country the

\* This was true when Mrs. Gaskell wrote ; but now that flowers are worn as boas, wristbands, necklaces, and the like, there would be no great wonder if young and old crowned themselves with garlands, as the ancients did.

love of delicate napery has so much died out. In old times a lady took pride in her linen-closet, and knew every tablecloth by name. Each piece had its story. This was made for the wedding-feast which marked a great family alliance, that for the christening of one who grew to be a beauty celebrated by the poets. One commemorated a naval victory in which a son of the house took part, another was prepared for the reception of royalty.' Meanwhile, as few families possess this historic napery, I advise my friends to be content with napkins of soft damask not elaborately ornamented. Who would care to apply to his bearded mouth a napkin covered with 'quaint charactery' and 'intricate devices.\*' At the same time I beg of them not to torture the 'fair damask' into fantastic shapes, but to let it be 'folded up neatly,' ready to the hand of the guest.

\* Mrs. Loftie's views of decorative napkin-work deserve to be put before the reader. If (she says) the napkin is not to be embroidered there are a thousand pretty devices in which to mark it. In one corner or the middle may be embroidered a coat of arms, initials, or some device chosen to distinguish the set for the benefit of the washerwoman. Such a crest, for instance, as that of the Hamilton family—a tree with a sword, and the word *THROUGH*—can be treated in many pretty ways, if not made too pictorial. The tree may be large or small, branching or bushy, covered with acorns or bare of leaves. In this way the crest as a device need never be monotonous. Mottoes, too, can be charmingly worked in all kinds of odd places, in one corner, or across the middle, or along one or all of the sides. Not only are devices pretty and appropriate, but they may sometimes afford a subject for dinner conversation when the weather has been exhaustively discussed. A grace, or an apt quotation, would not be out of place.—It is surely a comical idea that one should take up one's napkin, during 'a flash of silence,' and carefully inspect it in search of inspiration! We can fancy a couple of guests—lady and gentlemen—simultaneously seized with an epidemic of dulness, and resorting to their napkins to stimulate their flagging brains! *He*: 'Hum—oh yes—very appropriate quotation on this napkin—"May good digestion wait on appetite." Now, I have a good appetite, but a bad . . .' *She*: 'Oh, sir, let us examine the "wise saw" on *my* napkin: "Hunger is the best sauce." Now, Hunger . . .' *He*: 'As I was saying, a good appetite' . . . *She*: 'Then you would not want the sauce of hunger. And so' . . . *They are left talking*.—What a marvel that no enterprising vendor advertises 'Shakespearean Napkins'—'Byron Napkins'—'Low Church Napkins,' with evangelical texts—'High Church Napkins, with quotations from the Fathers! But then, if these came into vogue, a new responsibility would weigh upon the hostess; she would be called upon to see that each napkin was adapted to the tastes and prejudices of the guest; or a ritualistic young curate might find a Low Church napkin preaching heterodoxy with its evangelical folds! While a Low Churchman might wipe his fingers in a napkin dedicated to St. Apollodorus of Tyana!



As to knives and forks, plates and dishes, I shall say nothing : in these matters every gentlewoman is her own best guide. I need not caution you that every article should be scrupulously clean. Do not let the stems of the wine-glasses be too thin, or some nervous guest will assuredly break his, if not his neighbour's, and send a flood of wine over your damask and into his luckless partner's lap. Besides, broken glasses have to be replaced, and, if they are very fragile and expensive, the demand on the householder's limited means will do anything but sweeten his recollections of 'the dinner.' It is pitiful to see your kindly hostess sitting on thorns lest some fatal accident should befall her costly dishes, which she will not be able to replace except at a considerable sacrifice. Archbishop Whately wisely remarks that 'it may, perhaps, be laid down in reference to what may be called ornamental expense—anything that is not so strictly required as a decency that you would be censured and ridiculed for being without it—that you should have such articles only as you can afford, not only to buy, but to replace, supposing them of a perishable nature.' For the honour, as Bacon calls it, of any display of wealth, consists, surely, in not only having such and such articles, but having them without uneasiness, without any very anxious care about them. If you have a very fine set of china-ware, and are in a continual apprehension of its being broken, you had better, in point of respectability as well as of comfort, have been content with plain Worcester. If a lady is in a perpetual fever lest some costly veil or gown should be soiled or torn, this indicates that she would have done better to wear a less costly dress. There is something in what is said by little Sandford in the tale, who preferred a horn cup to one of silver because it never made him uneasy. This rule applies to dinner-giving, *ab initio*: if you are wise, and if you wish your friends to be comfortable, you will take care to keep within your means. Do not give a dinner at all unless you can afford it, and, if you give one, do not let it be on a scale which will tax your resources. Do not attempt too much. If you cannot afford to entertain more than four guests, do not ask six. And do not suppose that your dinner will 'go off' the better for an extravagant outlay. It is to be presumed and hoped that your guests do not come to see your silver-plate or your crystal, or to be filled with envy at the sumptuous decorations of your table ;

if they do, it is evident they are not worth any expenditure. No etiquette requires that you should entertain your guests in order that they may laugh at your ostentation or ridicule your economy. No etiquette requires that you should undertake an outlay by which your creditors will suffer. Proportion your dinner to your income, to the size of your room, to the conveniences at your command. There is a story told of the late Colonel Hanger that George IV., when Prince Regent, invited himself to dine with him, and that, as the Colonel was a man of small income, everybody wondered how he would acquit himself under the burden of such an honour. The appointed day arrived and the appointed hour. The Prince, attended by an equerry, appeared at the Colonel's modest lodging, was received with great courtesy, and, while dinner was preparing, was amused by the Colonel's lively and intelligent conversation. In due time a neatly-dressed handmaiden laid the whitest of cloths; the usual appurtenances were scrupulously bright and clean, though of the most moderate character; and it was with a keen appetite that the Prince sat down—to a baked leg of mutton, 'done to a turn,' with baked potatoes. There was some good ale, and, after dinner, a bottle of excellent wine—nothing more. But the Prince declared that he had never enjoyed a dinner so much in his life, and hinted at a second visit, which, however, the Colonel was too wise to accept, knowing that repetitions are rarely successful.

The moral of the story is obvious, of course, to the meanest understanding; and none of my readers *have* a mean understanding. Had Colonel Hanger foolishly attempted to put before the Prince a dinner of half-a-dozen courses, he would have made a grievous failure, and have involved himself in a pecuniary loss which might have gravely inconvenienced him.

Having arranged your room and your table, and decided to regulate your dinner in accordance with your means, you will decide upon the number of your guests. But here you will bear in mind the extent of your accommodation and of your establishment. One cook cannot prepare a dinner for more than twelve or fourteen persons; and one table-maid cannot wait properly upon more than eight or ten. If you keep a butler, or butler and footman, and if your cook have assistants in the kitchen, of course you can double the number of your *invités*. But I write chiefly for readers whose *ménage* is

on a modest footing, and such I advise to give two dinners with six guests at each, rather than one dinner to twelve; you will avoid trouble, and expense, and vexation of spirit, and your guests will have good cause to rejoice. Otherwise, you must resort to hired waiters, and probably seek additional *plats* from the nearest confectioner; both expedients being fatal to the success of your dinner.

Mrs. Gaskell's remarks on this subject are worth considering:—

'Part of my care beforehand,' she says, 'should go to the homely article of waiting. I should not mind having none at all; a dumb-waiter, pepper, salt, bread, and condiments within the reach or by the side of all. Little kindly attentions from one guest to another tend to take off the selfish character of the mere act of eating; and, besides, the guests would (or should) be too well educated, too delicate of taste, to interrupt a burst of wit, or feeling, or eloquence, as a mere footman often does, with the perpetual "Sherry, or Madeira?" or with the names of those mysterious *entremets* that always remind me of a white-kid glove that I once ate with Bechamel sauce, and found very tender and good, under the name of Oreilles de Veau à-la-something, but which experiment I never wish to repeat. There is something grateful and kindly in the little attention by which one guest silently puts by his neighbour all that he may require. I consider it a better opening to ultimate friendship, if my unknown neighbour readily passes me the salt, or silently understands that I like sugar to my soup, than if he had been introduced by his full name and title, and labelled with the one distinguishing action or book of his life, after the manner of men who are rather showmen than hosts.'

I venture to submit, however, that the dinner must be a very small one, indeed, at which the guests could be trusted to help themselves or to help each other. It would be necessary, too, that they should be very intimate with their host and hostess. On the whole, I am inclined to think that Mrs. Gaskell overrates the advantages which would grow from this mutual benevolence system; and I cannot believe that A. and B. will glide into an affectionate intimacy because A. passes B. the salt, and B. reciprocates by handing A. the pepper! It seems to me that the 'little attentions' spoken of would prove a serious obstacle to conversation. Fancy being interrupted in the middle of your

best anecdote with the request, 'Kindly hand me the mustard !' or quenched in the very beginning of the flow of your eloquence by the question : 'May I offer you some cabbage ?'

To continue our quotation from Mrs. Gaskell :—

'I have always believed that the charm of those little suppers, famous from time immemorial as the delightful P.S. to operas, was that there was no formal waiting, or over-careful arrangement of the table ; a certain sweet neglect pervaded all, very compatible with true elegance. The perfection of waiting is named in the story of the White Cat, where, if you remember, the hero prince is waited upon by hands without bodies, as he sits at table with the White Cat, and is served with that delicate fricassee of mice. By hands without bodies, I am very far from meaning hands without heads. Some people prefer female waiters ; footwomen as it were. I have weighed both subjects well in my mind, before sitting down to write this paper, and my verdict goes in favour of men ; for, all other things being equal, their superior strength gives them the power of doing things without effort, and consequently with less noise than any woman.'

I am compelled to differ from Mrs. Gaskell. There seems to me no comparison between the 'waiting' of a deft, good-tempered, trim little Amaryllis and the solemn formal attendance of a stately footman or ponderous butler, clothed in all the panoply of upper-servantdom. Mrs. Gaskell's argument as to superior strength falls to the ground now that the principal viands are placed and carved on the sideboard. If you have 'women-footmen,' take care that they are neatly dressed, and all dressed alike, and that each has a particular portion of the table to herself. They should be well drilled beforehand, so as to wait noiselessly, vigilantly, and expertly. There should be no delay ; each guest's wants should be anticipated ; and there should be no noise, no clashing of plates or ringing of metal, and, above all, no talking, except that which is done by the host and hostess, and their guests.

I pass on now to the consideration of two important points ; who should be your guests, and how they should be seated. To begin at the beginning : The letter of invitation to a formal dinner-party should be issued from three weeks to ten days in advance, according to circumstances. In London, and in the press of the season, the longer interval is requisite. You will

use an engraved card, if your social position authorise the formality ; or, more modestly, send a written invitation, which is generally from the pen of the hostess. It may run as follows :—

*Mr. and Mrs. ——— request the favour [or pleasure] of Mr. and Mrs. ———'s company at dinner on ——day, the ——, at —— o'clock.*

If the invitation be addressed to persons of rank superior to your own, for the word 'favour,' or 'pleasure,' substitute 'honour.'

The reply, if an acceptance, should be thus worded :—

*Mr. and Mrs. ——— have much pleasure in accepting Mr. and Mrs. ———'s polite invitation to dinner on the ——.*

If the invitation be declined, some good reason should be stated.

*Mr. and Mrs. —— regret that, owing to a previous engagement [or, owing to illness in the family, or, in consequence of their leaving town, etc., etc.], they cannot have the pleasure of accepting Mr. and Mrs. ——'s polite [or, kind] invitation for the——*

Observe, the answer, whether affirmative or negative, should be addressed to the mistress of the house, and despatched within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the invitation ; and if an acceptance be once given, it should be regarded as a 'debt of honour,' and conscientiously fulfilled. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.* Only in the case of some unforeseen and unavoidable emergency should it be recalled, and then only after a frank and full explanation to your hostess.

Invitations, where and when possible, should be sent by a servant ; but there is no breach of etiquette in making one of her Majesty's postmen your servant for the nonce, if the distance be great.

The choice of guests is a subject of great delicacy. It is a good rule to have an equal number of ladies and gentlemen, and of course married couples cannot be divided. They should occupy as nearly as possible the same social status, and it will be well to arrange that they shall be of the same political complexion. You will not invite individuals to meet one another who are notoriously on 'bad terms,' as the consequence



would be a feeling of coldness and restraint which would infallibly mar the success of your entertainment. Nor will you bring together persons of widely different tastes and characters ; it is only in a salad that oil and vinegar mix ! Sort your guests as carefully as you harmonise the colours of your dress. Let there be just sufficient difference to create variety, and not so much as to produce antagonism. I should not myself invite Mr. Bradlaugh to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury ! A country squire, fresh from his fields and coverts, will hardly assimilate with a millionaire from Capel Court and Westbournia. At the same time do not give 'shop' dinners ; that is, do not let your guests be all of the same class or profession, except on some special occasion. A party wholly composed of medical men or clergymen or lawyers is not to be thought of without a shudder. The guests themselves will resent the enormity. Nor is it advisable to construe too narrowly the law of social equality. A professional man of good repute will hold his own in any circle ; while wealth, mere wealth, wealth without culture or refinement, is scarcely tolerated in really good society.

'In high English society,' to quote that accomplished member of society, Mr. Hayward, in his 'Treatise on Codes of Manners,' 'any calling was some few years since derogatory to the perfect character of a gentleman ; it is now otherwise. Yet the distinction of the aristocratic professions, as opposed to other callings, is maintained, and it will perhaps continue to be so. These are the Church, the bar, the higher walks of medicine, the army and navy. The different members of these professions, and their wives and families, are fit for any society ; there is no possible objection to their mixing at a dinner-table with nobility, provided they be well-bred and agreeable. The literary man, if a gentleman by education and manners, is always an agreeable addition ; and the highest in rank have in this country set the example of inviting artists, architects, and sculptors, *but not always their families*, to their tables.'

I have italicised a phrase in this last sentence in order to offer the remark that, except under very special circumstances, no husband who respects his wife and himself will accept an invitation from which she is excluded. Nothing, to my mind, betrays the *snobbishness* that disfigured and degraded the character of Moore the poet more than the eagerness

with which he pushed his way into social circles which frowned upon his admirable wife. The spectacle is by no means a pleasing one of Bessy in her humble little home darning her children's socks, and Tom Moore singing his sentimental songs in 'gilded drawing-rooms,' as the pet and *protégé* of dowagers and demireps!

Do you recollect that famous dinner in Paternoster Row given by Mr. and Mrs. Bungay, the rich publisher and the rich publisher's wife?

'The house-porter in an evening coat,' and gentlemen with their hands encased in large white gloves of the celebrated Berlin web, received the guests' hats and coats in the passage of Mr. Bungay's house, and bawled their names up the stair. In the drawing-room Mrs. Bungay, in red satin and a turban, welcomed each new arrival. There was young Mr. Pendennis, a rising *littérateur*; Mr. Bore, the editor of 'The Londoner'; Mr. Trotter, who, from having broken out on the world as a poet of a tragic and suicidal cast, had now subsided into one of Mr. Bungay's back-shops as reader for that gentleman; and Captain Semple, an ex-beau still about town, and related in some indistinct manner to Literature and the Peerage. . . . This gentleman was listened to with great attention by Mrs. Bungay; his anecdotes of the aristocracy, of which he was a middle-aged member, delighted the publisher's lady; and he was almost a greater man than the great Mr. Wagg himself in her eyes.

Mr. Bungay, we are told, went about to his guests as they arrived, and did the honours of his house with much cordiality. As the talk rattled on—Mrs. Bungay surveying mankind from the window—a magnificent vision of an enormous grey cab-horse appeared, and moved rapidly. A pair of white reins, held by small white gloves, was visible behind it; a face pale, but nobly decorated with a chin-tuft, the head of an exiguous groom bobbing over the cab-head—these bright things were revealed to the delighted Mrs. Bungay. 'The Honourable Percy Popjoy's quite punctual, I declare,' she said, and sailed to the door to be in waiting at the nobleman's arrival.

The Honourable Percy Popjoy entered, in 'extremely lacquered' boots, with his hat under his arm, and a look of indescribable good-humour and fatuity in his round dimpled face, upon which Nature had burst out with a chin-tuft, but, ex-

hausted with the effort, had left the rest of the countenance bare of hair.

The great Mr. Wagg and the great Mr. Wenham followed, and so the ill-assorted dinner-party was gradually made up. You may read of it and all its vulgarity in Mr. Thackeray's 'History of Pendennis,' and learn from the sharp satire of the chronicler what to avoid.

The arrangement of the guests is the next subject of consideration. This may seem a small matter, but as society is at present constituted, established rules of procedure, by preventing the outbreak of jealousy, rivalry, and ill-feeling, are really very valuable—they are the oil which subdues the friction of the wheels within wheels of the social machine. In the first place, remember the French axiom, '*Place aux dames!*' If you cannot, at your party, pair off ladies and gentlemen in due order of precedence without putting husband and wife together—which is inadmissible—you must be guided by the ladies' order of precedence, and, so far, suit the acknowledged claims of the gentlemen. For example, a baroness's daughter 'taken in' by plain Mr. Smith will go before plain Miss Smith 'taken in' by Lord Tomnoddy. There is but one exception to this rule, namely, that the hostess must always be taken in by the gentleman of highest rank present. Further, according to Sir Bernard Burke, 'married ladies and widows are entitled to the same rank amongst each other as their husbands would respectively have borne between themselves, provided such rank arises from a dignity and not from an office or profession. It should be clearly understood that by rank through dignity alone, and not by profession or office, is precedence conferred upon a lady.' An example will render this deliverance clear: The Archbishop of Canterbury takes precedence of all peers, save dukes of the blood royal; but his wife, unless a peeress in her own right, or otherwise possessed of rank, has no special position, and her place will depend upon circumstances.

Persons of title take precedence, of course, according to their titles, unless foreign ambassadors of the first class are present, or Anglican bishops, who really rank with earls, but, in obedience to the unwritten law of courtesy, usually go before even dukes and marquises. The same precedency is accorded to all the dignified clergy. The wives of clergymen rank before barristers' wives, and the wives of esquires, *i.e.* gentle-

men neither in the professions nor commerce, before both clergymen's wives and barristers' wives. The wives of physicians follow those of the gentlemen 'learned in the law.'

Among peers or peeresses of the same rank the order of precedence is regulated by the date of creation, and this rule applies also to baronets and knights. You must not, however, be misled by 'courtesy titles,' that is, the titles given to the eldest sons of dukes, marquises, and earls. These are selected from their father's inferior titles: thus, the eldest son of the Duke of Argyll is called the Marquis of Lorne; the eldest son of the Duke of Sutherland, the Marquis of Stafford; the eldest son of the Marquis of Ripon, Earl de Grey; the eldest son of the Marquis of Salisbury, Viscount Cranborne; the eldest son of Earl Fortescue, Viscount Ebrington; the eldest son of the Earl of Ravensworth, Lord Eslington. The general rule, but not the absolute one, and therefore the presumption, but not the certainty, is that the eldest son of a peer will bear a courtesy title representing the rank in the peerage next below that of his father. The bearers of these titles take rank simply as *the eldest sons of their fathers!* The eldest son of a duke ranks after marquises and before earls; the eldest son of a marquis after the younger sons of dukes of the blood royal and before the younger sons of dukes and before viscounts; the eldest son of an earl after viscounts and before the younger sons of marquises and bishops; the eldest son of a viscount, who has no courtesy title, but is styled Honourable, after barons and before earls' younger sons; the eldest son of a baron, also styled Honourable, after the younger sons of earls and before privy councillors and judges.

The younger sons of dukes and marquises are 'lords,' but they have no territorial title, and are distinguished by their Christian names, as Lord Claud Hamilton, Lord Colin Campbell. The daughters usually enjoy the same rank as their eldest brother, and follow immediately after his wife. Daughters of dukes, marquises, and earls are styled ladies (always with the Christian name): Lady Elizabeth Campbell, Lady Muriel Hay.

The younger sons of dukes rank after the eldest sons of marquises and before viscounts; the eldest sons of marquises after those of earls and before bishops; the younger sons of marquises after those of earls and before bishops; the younger sons of

earls after the eldest sons of viscounts and barons ; the younger sons of viscounts after privy councillors and judges and before the younger sons of barons, while the eldest sons of barons take rank after those of viscounts and before baronets.

As the guests arrive, the lady of the house prepares to receive them in the drawing-room, advancing about halfway to meet them as they enter. Now is the time for her to prove herself equal to her great position, like Napoleon on a battle-field. She must have something pertinent and pleasant to say to each. Her remarks must not be so long as to weary, nor so brief as to make the new-comer feel that he is being 'snubbed.' No more attention must be given to one guest than to another, and by striking out suitable topics of conversation she must keep all interested and make them to settle down into a mood of tranquil satisfaction. She must rigidly control her temper—must be 'mistress of herself,'—though some untoward guest by his late-coming delay the dinner and strike terror into the cook's heart. Her equanimity must be perfect, so that no *contretemps* shall be able to disturb it. At last, when all are assembled and dinner has been announced, she takes the arm of the gentleman of the highest rank present, while her husband offers his to the lady of the highest rank. These two couples lead and the others follow according to precedence, the different couples having been settled by previous arrangement. As they enter the warm, brilliantly-lighted, and well-ventilated dining-room (with a temperature of about 63 degrees), the master of the house indicates where they will sit, or they are sometimes allowed to seat themselves.

The lady of the house usually takes the head of the table—sole monarch of all she surveys. According to the present rational arrangement, she has nothing to do, however, but to converse with her guests and partake of her own share of the viands. She is no longer required to exhaust herself in dissecting poultry or hacking and hewing large joints of meat, as in the old time, when the lady who presided at the dinner-table needed not only the *savoir faire*, but a considerable share of physical strength. Thus, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, her mother being dead, took the headship of the marquis's table. The mistress of a country house, as Lady Mary's grand-daughter observes, had then not only to persuade and encourage her guests to eat voraciously, but to carve every dish, when chosen,



with her own hands. The higher her rank, the more indispensable this laborious duty. Each joint was placed before her in turn, to be operated upon by her, and her alone. The lords and squires on either hand proffered not their assistance. The master of the house, seated opposite to her, did not act as croupier, but contented himself with pushing the bottle about after dinner. As for the crowd of guests who sat below the salt, the most inconsiderable among them, the squire's younger brother, the chaplain who mumbled prayers and took the vacant hand at whist, the curate in rusty cassock from the neighbouring village, or the subaltern from the nearest military station, if compelled, through her neglect, to help himself to a slice of the mutton that steamed at the end of his board, would have digested it as an affront, and gone home in dudgeon, half-inclined to vote the wrong way at the next election. There were then professional carving-masters, who taught young ladies the craft scientifically, and from one of these Lady Mary received lessons thrice a week, so that she might acquit herself to admiration on her father's public days; on which occasions, that she might discharge her duties without let or hindrance, she ate her own dinner alone an hour or two beforehand. Now-a-days, however, young ladies learn to cook and not to carve.

Relieved from those cares, which must have sat so heavily on the shoulders of our grandmothers, the mistress of the house is at leisure to draw upon her conversational resources for the benefit of her guests. If she observe an ebb in the tide of talk, she must be prompt to arrest it with some *à propos* remark. If she notice that a subject is nearly thrashed out, she must be quick to start her friends on another course. She will interfere with a happy suggestion, if she discover that the conversation is nearing the rocks of scandal. Her husband, it is to be presumed, will do his part at *his* end of the table; and in this way the electric current will run from pole to pole, making a complete circuit of your little coterie, and quickening and stimulating every member of it. A hostess who can talk—that is, can talk well—or, at least, sensibly and to the purpose, will ensure the success of a dinner, though it were only the proverbial dinner of herbs. It is a great mistake to think that, if the presiding lady be young and pretty, she can hold her tongue and be content with dispensing bright glances and sweet

smiles ; one might as well put at the head of the table a wax figure from Madame Tussaud's ! Even at those symposia where Macaulay poured out his conversational riches, it was felt that not a little of their charm was due to the lively gossip of Lady Holland.

Now, as to the bill of fare, or *menu*, which should be nicely written on an ornamental card, and placed, if the dinner be one of some pretensions, by everybody's plate. I need hardly say that it must consist of fish, soup, entrées, and dessert. It may sometimes happen in the country that the fish of necessity must be conspicuous by its absence ; but this should rarely be the case now that the railways place us in command of all the great markets, and a telegram will bring to our door in a few hours the scaly spoils of Billingsgate. The extent of your provision will be regulated, however, by what you know of your guests. There are people so constituted as to consider it an insult if the dinner-table to which they are invited does not groan beneath its weight of dainties. Happily, you are not likely to be reduced to such expedients as Caleb Balderstone, when called upon to provide for the Master of Ravenswood's unexpected guests, or the lover in Boccaccio's tale—recently dramatised by Mr. Tennyson—who killed his favourite falcon that his lady-love might have wherewithal to eat. Our hosts now sin rather in the way of excess, which is almost as great a fault as scarcity. You may dine at tables where the profusion seems to crush out the conversation, where the display reminds you of the 'solemn feast' and costly made by Julian :—

' All round his hall

From column on to column, as in a wood,  
Not such as here—an equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd ; and beneath,  
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,  
Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven knows where  
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,  
And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,  
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever round in gold—  
Others of glass as costly—some with gems  
Moveable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value—ah heavens !  
Why need I tell you all ?—suffice to say  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guests.'

Again I say, that this excess is a fault. A refined taste will be offended by a glow and glare and ostentation which reveal the host's pride, rather than his desire for the comfort of his friends. As a general rule, the supply should be liberal, but not lavish, and the viands should be well-cooked and delicate, rather than sumptuous and unusual. Your object should be to send your guest away with a pleasant sense of having thoroughly enjoyed himself, though unable to say in what one thing his enjoyment consisted; not with his mind confined to one or two particular dishes of a rare and exceedingly costly character. The expenditure often poured out upon dinner-parties is a blunder; the meal sinks, like Tarpeia, crushed beneath its weight of gold. After all, my friends, we are not wholly material, and we do not come to one another's tables entirely for the *cotelettes à Maintenon* and the *mayonnaise* and the last device of the inventive genius of the kitchen. We come to show the kindliness of our sympathies, and to exchange thoughts and fancies on things old and new; not to gratify our palates, but to open our hearts and elevate our minds. Few of us, I suppose, cherish such wild dreams of impossible dishes as did Ben Jonson's Sir Epicure Mammon when revelling in his anticipations of the illimitable sensuality to be purchased by boundless wealth:—

'Thy meat shall all come in, in Indian shells,  
Dishes of agate set in gold, and studded  
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies,  
The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels,  
Boil'd in the spirit of sol, and dissolv'd pearl,  
Apicius' diet, 'gainst the epilepsy :  
And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,  
Headed with diamond and carbuncle.  
My foot-boy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmon,  
Knots, godwits, lampreys : I myself will have  
The beards of barbels served, instead of salads ;  
Oil'd mushrooms : and the swelling unctuous paps  
Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,  
Drest with an exquisite and fragrant sauce.'

For my own part, I am willing to believe that 'enough is as good as a feast,' because 'enough' *is* a feast. Kind hostess, let your table be bounteously, but not ostentatiously, spread; and, before all, let your dishes be well cooked and of a wholesome, digestible character. And see that they be served-up either hot or cold, according to their nature; not 'betwixt

and between,' neither hot nor cold, like the greasy soup at a third-rate restaurant—a Laodicean 'neither-the-one-thing-nor-the-other,' which every honest stomach rebels at.

I shall scarcely be expected to write a cookery book or to draw up bills of fare. Yet I shall subjoin two or three to assist the reader and myself in our discussion of this all-important subject.

Let us, for instance, consider a bill of fare for six persons (January). First course: Palestine soup; fried smelts; stewed eels. Entrées: Ragoût of lobster; broiled mushrooms; vol-au-vent of chicken. Second course: Sirloin of beef; boiled fowls and celery sauce; tongue, garnished with Brussels sprouts. Third course: Wild ducks; Charlotte aux pommes; cheesecakes; transparent jelly, inlaid with brandy cherries; blancmange; Nesselrode pudding.

Dinner for eight persons (February). First course: Mock turtle soup; fillets of turbot à la crème; fried filleted soles and anchovy sauce. Entrées: Curried mutton; macaroni à la Milanaise. Second course: Stewed rump of beef à la jardinière; roast fowls; boiled ham. Third course: Roast pigeons; rhubarb tartlets; meringues; clear jelly; cream; ice pudding; soufflé. Dessert and ices.

Dinner for five persons (March). First course: Bonne femme soup; boiled turbot and lobster sauce; salmon cutlets. Entrées: Compôte of pigeons; fillets of mutton and tomato sauce. Second course: Roast lamb; boiled half calf's head, tongue, and brains; boiled bacon-cheek, garnished with spoonfuls of spinach; vegetables. Third course: Ducklings; plum-pudding; ginger cream; trifle; rhubarb tart; cheesecakes; fondues, in cases. Dessert and ices.

Dinner for six persons (April). First course: Tapioca soup; boiled salmon and lobster sauce. Entrées: Calf's head en tortue; oyster patties. Second course: Saddle of mutton; boiled capon and white sauce; tongue; vegetables. Third course: Soufflé of rice; lemon cream; Charlotte à la Parisienne; rhubarb tart. Dessert.

Dinner for twelve persons (May). First course: White soup; asparagus soup; salmon cutlets; boiled turbot and lobster sauce. Entrées: Chicken vol-au-vent; lamb cutlets and cucumbers; fricandeau of veal; stewed mushrooms. Second course: Roast lamb; haunch of mutton; boiled and

roast fowls ; vegetables. Third course : Ducklings ; goslings ; Charlotte rum ; Vanilla cream ; gooseberry tart ; custards ; cheesecakes ; cabinet pudding and iced pudding. To conclude with dessert and ices.

Dinner for eight persons (June). First course : Vermicelli soup ; trout à la Genévé ; salmon cutlets. Entrées : Cotelettes d'agneau purée de pois ; Madras dry curry. Second course : Roast beef ; tongue ; boiled ham ; vegetables. Third course : Roast ducks ; compôte of gooseberries ; strawberry jelly ; pastry ; iced pudding ; cauliflower with cream sauce. Dessert.

Dinner for ten persons (July). First course : Soup à la Paysanne ; crimped salmon and parsley batter ; trout aux frais herbes. Entrées : Salmi of duck ; macaroni with tomatoes. Second course : Loin of veal with béchamel sauce ; salad ; braised ham ; vegetables. Third course : Turkey poult ; lobster salad ; cherry tart ; lemon cream ; marrow pudding. Dessert and ices.

Here is a dinner for eight persons (August) : Soup Julienne ; fillets of turbot and Dutch sauce ; red mullet. This forms the first course. For entrées : Riz de veau aux tomatoes ; fillets of ducks and peas. Second course : Haunch of venison ; boiled capon and oysters ; ham garnished, and vegetables. Third course : Leveret ; fruit jelly ; compôte of greengages ; plum tart ; custards ; omelette soufflé. Dessert and ices to follow.

Dinner for eight persons (September). First course : Palestine soup ; red mullet and Italian sauce. Entrées : Minced fowl and macaroni ; lamb cutlets, with purée de pois. Second course : Loin of veal, with béchamel sauce ; roast haunch of venison ; braised hare ; grouse pie ; vegetables. Third course : Roast hare ; plum tart ; whipped cream ; peach jelly. Dessert.

Dinner for twelve persons (October). First course : Carrot soup à la Créci ; soup à la Reine ; baked cod ; stewed eels. Entrées : Riz de veau and tomato sauce ; vol-au-vent of chicken ; pork cutlets and sauce Robert ; grilled mushrooms. Second course : Rump of beef à la jardinière ; roast goose ; boiled fowls and celery sauce ; tongue, garnished ; vegetables. Third course : Grouse ; pheasants ; quince jelly ; lemon cream ; apple tart ; compôte of peaches ; Nesselrode pudding ; cabinet pudding ; scalloped oysters. Dessert and ices.



Dinner for six persons (November). First course: Game soup; slices of codfish and Dutch sauce; fried eels. Entrées: Kidneys à la maître d'hôtel; oyster patties. Second course: Saddle of mutton; boiled capon and rice; small ham; lark pudding. Third course: Roast hare; apple tart; pineapple cream; clear jelly; cheesecakes; marrow pudding; Nesselrode pudding. Dessert.

Dinner for twelve persons (December). Game soup; carrot soup à la Créci; codfish au gratin; fillets of whittings à la maître d'hôtel. Entrées: fillet de bœuf and sauce piquante; fricasseed chicken; oyster patties; curried rabbit. Second course: Roast turkey and sausages; stewed beef à la jardinière; boiled leg of pork; vegetables. Third course: Partridges; Charlotte aux pommes; mince pies; orange jelly; lemon cream; apple tart; dessert and ices.

From the preceding bills of fare, one for each month, the reader will be able to form some idea of what a 'company dinner' should or may be. For my own part, I think that there are too many items in each, and that the pruning-knife may be carefully applied to their luxuriance. At all events, these are decidedly for what may be called state occasions, when it is desired to do special honour to special guests, or to exhibit all the resources of the establishment. As a rule, a good dinner may be made up of two courses: the first, to include soup, or for a large party, fish and joint, with entrées; the second: roast (game, fowl, or fish); and entremets: salad, vegetables, and sweets. Or it may be even simpler, and yet very good. For instance: soup, joint, and one entrée; roast (fish or fowl), vegetables, and sweets.

Is the reader a total abstainer? And, being such, does he compel his guests to abstain for the time they remain at his table? If he answer these questions affirmatively, he may pass on at once to the next paragraph. For as we take no heed of teetotalism in these pages, we must needs say a word or two in reference to the liquors. Let them be good; let them be sufficient in quantity: but discourage any attempt to 'push the bottle' beyond the limits of a becoming moderation. The days have gone by when the 'gentlemen,' after the ladies had left, sat down deliberately to drink as much as, and even more than, they could carry; when they sank below the table, one

after the other, and terminated the dinner in a debauch. But even now, and even in good society, it is not unknown for guests to enter the drawing-room, after a protracted session, with flushed faces, boisterous manners, and thick speech. Let no such scene occur beneath your roof, and to prevent it keep a rigid guard upon yourself, and set an example of rigid temperance.

It is usual to place sherry on the table with the soup; then port, claret, and madeira; and with dessert, port, sherry, champagne, claret, and hock. Provide Bass's ale and Guinness's stout for the wise souls who adhere to the drink of their stalwart forefathers. Many mineral and cooling waters are now supplied: such as Apollinaris, seltzer, potash, zoedone, lemonade, Bilin, and the like. Take care that your wines are of the best quality. Good port can hardly be obtained even at any price, and you are at liberty to omit it, and instead of champagne you might substitute some of the light dinner wines, Greek or Hungarian, now deservedly in fashion. No sensible man will vary his liquors at dinner. A glass of Bass with his roast, and one or two glasses of sherry afterwards ought to suffice him; or he may take a glass or two of claret during dinner and a glass of sherry with dessert. If he respect himself and his hostess he will observe the most rigid moderation. Happily the days are past when men thought it a matter of vaunt that they could take their three bottles.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the old custom of drinking wine with people has become almost as obsolete as the dodo, while the once famous saying of 'no heel-taps' is as much exploded as Cambronne's fictitious rhodomontade, 'The Guard dies, but never surrenders.'

I have before me a manual of etiquette containing much minute advice to diners-out, so accurate that it irresistibly recalls to mind an amusing passage in one of Charles Dickens's works, where the speaker affectionately assures a neophyte in social practices that 'in London it is not the custom to put the knife in the mouth—for fear of accidents; and that while the fork is reserved for that use, it is not put further in than is necessary!' The speaker continues:—'It is scarcely worth mentioning, only it is as well to do as other people do. Also, the spoon is not generally used overhand, but under. This has two advantages. You get at your mouth better (which,

after all, is the object), and you save a good deal of the attitude of opening oysters on the part of the right elbow. And excuse my mentioning that society as a body does not expect one to be so strictly conscientious in emptying one's glass as to turn it bottom upwards with the rim on one's nose.' The directions given in the manual to which I refer are equally precise. Here is a specimen or two :

'Do not *spit out of your mouth* the skins of grapes, stones of fruit, pips, or *anything else* (!) Receive them on the prongs of your fork, laid horizontally, and place them as conveniently as so inelegant a process will allow upon your plate.'

'Do not play with your fingers on the table as if on a piano, nor make pellets of bread and roll them about. Do not illustrate your remarks with plans drawn with your nail on the cloth or with the knives and forks. Do not stretch your legs out under the table, nor try to reach the feet of your opposite neighbour.'

'Do not touch any of the fruit with your fingers. If you wish to peel an apple, pear, or orange, hold the fruit on your fork in the left hand and peel with a silver knife in your right.'

'Do not eat as if for the first time in your life, that is to say, do not eat ravenously, and do not eat in a noticeable way. Do not smack your lips or take a long breath after eating, as if the exercise had fatigued you. Do not make any noises in your mouth or throat, and do not pass your tongue round the outside of your gums. Do not ever, even with cheese, put your knife in your mouth, or pick your teeth, or thrust your fingers inside your jaws. Remove fish-bones, if you have allowed any to intrude, by means of your napkin. On no account spit them on to your plate. Do not take the bones of birds, etc., up in your fingers to suck them. Wipe your fingertips, if soiled, on your table-napkin, not on your tongue or on the table-cloth. Never use the table-cloth to wipe your mouth with—you might as well use it instead of a handkerchief. Make no remarks upon what is set before you, either to praise or dispraise. Do not drink or speak when you have any eatables in your mouth.'

For what barbarians are such directions as these intended? To no one who has mingled ever so little in decent society can they be necessary, to no one who has the slightest pretensions to be admitted as a guest at any ordinary dining-table.

I suppose there is a 'social sphere,' the inmates of which 'spit fish-bones on their plates,' and 'put their knives in their mouths,' and 'make pellets of bread and roll them about,' perhaps even propel them at one another; but I cannot imagine that these Goths and Vandals, these wild strange specimens of uncivilised man, are ever likely to patronise books of etiquette or the laws of good society, into which, by the way, I should think they have as little chance of intruding as the Spaniards have of recovering Gibraltar!

It has always seemed to me that books on etiquette are, as a rule, vulgar. I have before me one of the best of them, and yet, in discussing supposed 'habits at table' it descends to the most atrocious vulgarities. The author proposes to accompany his reader to dinner, to determine 'whether he is a well-bred man or not,' and specially for the purpose of giving him the advice which, I suppose, is to *make* him a well-bred man. How far that advice is couched in the language of a man of good breeding let us see.

'The first thing you do,' he says, 'is to sit down'—an elementary principle which hardly needs to be set forth in large type. 'Stop, sir!' exclaims our *arbiter elegantiarum*; 'pray do not *cram yourself* into the table that way. Come! no nonsense; sit up, if you please. I can't have your fine head of hair filling a side dish on my table; you must not bury your face in the plate, you came to show it, and it ought to be alive.' What wit! what elegance! Who could fail to profit by instructions so agreeably conveyed? But, to continue (as the heroes say in melodrama), 'Your soup you eat with a spoon'—did it ever occur to any rational being to eat it with a knife?—'Yes, that will do; but I beg you will not make that odious noise in drinking your soup. It is louder than a dog lapping water: *and a cat would be quite genteel to it.*' More wit! more elegance! What an exquisite humourist is this professor of etiquette! Yet another specimen: 'Fish must never be touched with a knife. Take a fork in the right, and a small piece of bread in the left hand. Good; but—? Oh! that is atrocious; of course you must not swallow the bones; but you should rather do so than spit them out in that way. Put up your napkin, like this, and land the tail-bone on your plate. Don't rub your bread in the sauce, my good man, *nor go propping about* after the shrimps or oysters therein.' Has the

reader had enough, or would he like one more dainty quotation? 'That is the fourth time wine has been handed to you, and I am sure you have had enough. Decline this time, if you please. Decline that dish, too. Are you going to eat of everything that is handed? I pity you, if you do. No, you must not ask for more cheese; and you must eat it with your fork. Break the rusk with your fingers. Good. You are drinking a glass of old port. Do not quaff it down at a gulp in that way. Never drink a whole glassful of anything at once.'

To any person really ignorant of the habits of good society the best advice I can give is, not to study manuals of etiquette, which deal in such trivial and even offensive matters as this; but to observe closely and silently *what good society does*. A quick and careful observer will soon pick up knowledge enough to save him from the commission of disagreeable solecisms. The main obstacle in his way will be *nervousness*, and that nervousness usually springs from *self-consciousness*. The unaccustomed guest is recommended, therefore, to think as little as possible of himself and his doings, and, above all, not to suppose that everybody is watching his motions for the purpose of unfavourable criticism. Let him cherish a due measure of self-respect, and be equally on his guard to keep down vanity or excessive humility. Do not let him by every action proclaim that 'I-think-myself-as-good-as-you' kind of independence, which self-raised men are too apt to affect; but let him avoid the servile manner which craves indulgence on the plea of admitted inferiority. If A. invites you to his table, you are, as A.'s guest, the equal of A. and his friends; but neither more nor less. Burns, the ploughman of Mossgiel, had no opportunity of gaining a knowledge of social usages, and assuredly he never had recourse to any handbook on etiquette; yet when, after the publication of his first volume of poems, he was invited to Edinburgh, and introduced into its most exclusive circles, he comported himself with a propriety which won general admiration. And such will always be the case where and when a man respects himself, while respecting those with whom he is thrown into association. So Mrs. Craik wisely represents her hero, John Halifax, on his first appearance in Mrs. Jessop's drawing-room—and in society—as taking his place with 'modest self-possession.' 'Society's dangerous waters accordingly became smooth to him, as to a good swimmer, who knows his



own strength, trusts it, and struggles not.' It may be that, in some past age of darkness, such minute directions as we have censured may have been of service to a limited class. But now that society as a whole has made an upward movement—now that the laws of courtesy are happily substituted for the 'rules and regulations' of gentility—they are not only unnecessary but offensive, and their retention in so-called manuals of etiquette is a grave mistake.

But *one* maxim there is which may be enforced in the very best society, both upon host and guest: *Be punctual*. Let the hostess keep exact time in all her arrangements, and let the guest make his appearance at the exact time prescribed on his card of invitation. To be too late is a crime, and to be too early a blunder. In the latter case you burst in upon an unprepared circle; in the former, you delay everybody and threaten a well-cooked dinner with ruin. Either offence is sufficiently grave, but, of the two, the former is the more unpardonable, for it inconveniences your hostess, disturbs the cook, and spoils the temper of the other guests, whom you keep idly waiting in the drawing-room through your negligence and vanity. To all guests who are more than five minutes behind the appointed time the hostess would be fully justified in addressing the poet's prohibition:

“Too late! too late! you cannot enter now!”

I can fancy her chanting to herself in irreverent parody:

‘Late, late, so late! and now the soup is cold!

Late, late, so late! in vain the fib is told,

Too late, too late! you cannot enter now.

‘My watch was wrong, for that I do repent,

And sure I am, fair lady, you’ll relent:—

Too late, too late! you cannot enter now.

‘No dinner—none! oh, this is sad despite,

And see! your room’s ablaze with cheerful light!—

But not for you—you cannot enter now.

‘Have I not heard your cook’s a very Ude?

O let me in—I hope I don’t intrude!—

No, no; too late! you *shall not* enter now!

Hunger is said to be the best sauce; I am sure that good conversation is the best accompaniment of a good dinner. But what does good conversation imply? First, that each guest will talk only upon such subjects as he really understands;

second, that he will be careful not to talk more than his share. During the more substantial stages of the repast, opportunities for wise, or witty, or any kind of talk are few, and we must address ourselves chiefly to our neighbours; but when the dessert is on the table—across the walnuts and the wine—the flow of reason may gradually absorb every person present. It is then that a man shows what *is*, or what *is not* in him. It is then that Dunderhead prosed and Dazzle effervesces, and that you and I, my friend, endeavour to display the extent of our information and the solidity of our judgment! We do not talk much, but what we say is to the purpose, and we are generally anxious to lead the conversation into a channel acceptable to every guest. We are not less anxious to avoid ill-natured and splenetic remarks; and at the first sign of the cloven foot of Scandal mutter a Benedicite, and change the subject. Ever borne in memory by you and me, dear friend, is Sir William Temple's wise remark, that the first ingredient in conversation is truth, the next good sense, the third good humour, and the fourth wit. But 'wit,' perhaps, is not within our reach? Very well, stick to the other ingredients. For my part, I can dispense with wit, if I can secure truth, good sense, and good humour.

The art of conversation is not to be taught in books: it can be acquired only by constant intercourse with society acting upon a well-stocked mind. Both conditions are essential to success: experience, and information. We must know not only *what* to say, but *how* to say it. And, remember, if the faculty of talking well to one indispensable accomplishment in a successful conversationalist, another is the faculty of listening patiently. The man who always talks and never listens is a bore of the greatest magnitude; so is the man who always listens and never talks. For conversation must be neither monologue nor duologue; but the harmonious combination of many voices and many minds—a *pot pourri*, to which every flower contributes its distinct odour, while all are so happily blended as to produce one general effect. Dr. Johnson has some sage observations on this part of our subject:—'He that would please in company,' he says, 'must be attentive to what style is most proper. The scholastic should never be used but in a select company of learned men. The didactic should seldom be used, and then only by judicious aged persons, or

those who are eminent for piety or wisdom. No style is more extensively acceptable than the narrative, because this does not carry an air of superiority over the rest of the company, and therefore is most likely to please them; for this purpose we should store our memory with short anecdotes and entertaining pieces of history. Almost every one listens with eagerness to extemporary history,' which, however, has a fatal tendency to degenerate into ill-natured gossip. 'Vanity often co-operates with curiosity, for he that is a hearer in one place wishes to qualify himself to be a principal speaker in more inferior company, and therefore more attention is given to narrations than anything else in conversation. It is true, indeed, that sallies of wit and quick replies are very pleasing in conversation, but they frequently tend to raise envy in some of the company; but the narrative way neither raises this nor any other evil passion, but keeps all the company nearly upon an equality, and if judiciously managed will at once entertain and improve them all.'

Such, I say, is the sage advice of Dr. Johnson, who was himself a famous conversationalist, but I doubt whether the reader will be able to make much use of it. The fact is, it is far easier to say what the social talker should *not* do than what he *may* do. I remember to have seen a book with the title of 'What to Eat, Drink, and Avoid,' and I remember thinking, as I skimmed its pages, how much easier it was to 'avoid' than to 'eat' or 'drink.' And so, in conversation, it is easier to know what *not* to say than what to say. My hints must deal in negatives:—Don't repeat old jokes, venerable Joe Millers, or fossil riddles dug up from some antediluvian strata and furbished anew for the occasion. They are probably as familiar to your hearers as to yourself, and you have no right to inflict them upon society's jaded ears:—

'Stale reversions,  
Gleaned from the rags and frippery of wit.'

Don't dress up the whimsicalities of *Punch* and parade them for your own. Don't weary the company with your own personal experiences, or with those of your sisters, your cousins, and your aunts. Society has never any indulgence for such details. Don't in mixed company parade your theological or political views; you cannot be justified in provoking a difference of opinion at a table which is not your own. Don't turn

sacred subjects into ridicule ; the serious will be disgusted with your flippancy, and the man of the world will condemn your want of taste. And by the utterance of a *double entendre*, do not degrade yourself—no, not even when the ladies have withdrawn—or by the repetition of a ‘hazardous anecdote,’ or by an allusion which impure minds can twist into an impure meaning. Well says Cowper :—

‘There is a prurience in the speech of some,  
Wrath stays Him, or else God would strike them dumb ;  
His wise forbearance has their end in view,  
They fill their measure and receive their due.  
The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,  
Names almost worthy of a Christian’s praise,  
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,  
And shut up every satyr in his den.’

Cowper’s poem of ‘Conversation’ from which I take this extract, is full of sound counsel, which may be commended to the consideration of the reader. As, for instance, when he warns the talker against inflicting on his audience protracted details of their own paltry little lives :

‘A story in which native humour reigns,  
Is often useful, always entertains ;  
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,  
May furnish illustration, well applied ;  
But sedentary weavers of long tales  
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.  
’Tis the most asinine employ on earth  
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,  
And echo conversations dull and dry,  
Embellished with “He said,” and, “So said I !”’

The poet tells us not only what our talk should not, but what it should be. Thus he says :—

‘A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct,  
The language plain, and incidents well-linked ;  
Tell not as new what everybody knows,  
And new or old, still hasten to a close,  
There centring in a focus round and neat,  
Let all your rays of information meet :  
What neither yields no profit nor delight  
Is like a nurse’s lullaby at night ;  
Guy, Earl of Warwick, and fair Eleanore,  
Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.’

Topics of conversation are not far to seek in these active days of ours, when the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns. The current history of the time—the last

drama or opera, or newest book—the scene of war—and there is always war somewhere—the last device of some scrupulously great or greatly unscrupulous statesman—the latest exploit of swimmer or mountain-climber—the last invention—these, and similar themes, will call forth and maintain an agreeable discussion. After all, in company conversation, quite as much depends on the *way* you say a thing as on the thing that is said. You must learn to express yourself with conciseness and accuracy, and, if possible, with a happy turn of expression that, though it will not be wit, will sound witty. Your talk should not be in epigrams, yet should it be epigrammatic. Around the dinner-table, elaborate criticism or argument, pathos or profundity, would be woefully out of place. You are not to soliloquise like Hamlet, but to bandy light speeches and sharp sayings like Mercutio. Of course you will avoid bitterness; there must be no vinegar, but a touch of lemon-juice will flavour the mixture. Don't talk like Scribonius, in wild hexameters and dashing iambs; nor like Verdigris, in mordant jests which where they fall leave a deep scar; nor like Pomposo, in stilted harangues in glorification of yourself and all that belongs to you, your wife, and your oxen, and everything that is yours; nor like Simper, in petty commonplaces which sound, and are, as empty as the exhausted receiver of an air-pump. Eschew everything that savours of the irreverent, and, as you love me, let not your tongue give way to slang! The slang of the æsthetic disciple of sweetness and light—the slang of the new school of erotic poets—the slang of the art-critic—the slang of the studios—the slang of the green-room—the slang of Mayfair—and the slang of the Haymarket; shun each and all as you would flee from the shield of Medusa! Plain English and pure, from the well undefiled of the best writers and speakers: let that be the vehicle in which your opinions are conveyed, and the plainer and purer the better.

Lord Beaconsfield, in his 'Lothair,' describes the conversation that fascinates society with his accustomed skill. As I have already hinted, it is not wit, but it sounds like it. Here is a specimen:—

“Why do you not marry, Hugo?” said Bertram.

“I respect the institution,” said Hugo, “which is admitting something in these days; and I have always thought that every woman should marry, and no man.”



“It makes a woman and it mars a man, you think?” said Lothair.

“But I do not exactly see how your view would work practically,” said Bertram.

“Well, my view is a social problem,” said Hugo, “and social problems are the fashion at present. It would be solved through the exceptions, which prove the principle. In the first place, there are your swells who cannot avoid the halter: you are booked when you are born; and then there are moderate men like myself, who have their weak moments. I would not answer for myself if I could find an affectionate family with good shooting and first-rate claret.”

“There must be many families with such conditions,” said Lothair.

Hugo shook his head. “You try. Sometimes the wine is good and the shooting bad; sometimes the reverse; sometimes both are excellent, but then the tempers and the manners are equally detestable.”

“I vote we three do something to-morrow,” said Bertram.

“What shall it be?” said Hugo.

“I vote we run down to Richmond at sunset and dine, and then drive our teams up by moonlight. What say you, Lothair?”

“I cannot, I am engaged. I am engaged to go to the opera.”

“Fancy going to the opera in this sweltering weather!” exclaimed Bertram.

“He must be going to be married,” said Hugo.

In ‘Lothair’ you will find pages upon pages of this conversation, which will as little bear analysis as a *vol-au-vent*, and must be taken, like champagne, while it effervesces.

It is not usual now to sit long at dessert after the ladies, on receiving the usual telegraphic signal from the hostess, have sailed out of the room. There is no duller company than that of a dozen or so of male creatures, without a pair of bright eyes among them; it is a relief, therefore, to rise from the wine, of which we have had enough, at the earliest moment, and seek the refined repose of the drawing-room; besides, what greater compliment can we pay the ladies than to show that life without them is intolerable? Very pleasant is it to exchange agreeable nothings with them while we sip our tea or coffee.

Then a little music—a little more conversation—and, about eleven, we go home. A bath and a change of dress, and we are ready to fulfil our engagement with Mrs. Blank, whose card we received some days ago, inscribed in the right-hand corner with the magic word—‘Dancing.’

There is a sound of revelry by night,  
And Harley Street has gathered (about ten)  
Much beauty and some chivalry, and bright  
The gas shines o’er sweet maidens and young men !

Mrs. Haweis sketches with a lively pen the dinner of to-day, the dinner of the new style ; in her sketch there is little, I think, of caricature. It is not, however, a dinner *à la Russe*.

Her satire is levelled first at the host, who, when he should be concentrating his attention on his guests, and doing his best to elicit their conversational faculties—a most arduous task in a company of restive Englishmen—is working hard, with carving knife and fork, at the bottom of the table. Of course, he carves badly—most Englishmen do—never hears when he is addressed, splashes his cuffs with gravy, and bedews his honest brow with perspiration. He has little time, poor man ! to refresh his own exhausted frame ; so constant are the demands, like *Oliver Twist*’s, for more.

At the head of the table, behind a pair of fowls, sits the mistress. ‘She knows she cannot move her arms freely (what woman in a low-necked dress ever could ?) ; her bracelets entangle themselves with the legs of the fowl and with each other, and clank like chains and gyves. She gladly accepts the offer of the nearest cavalier, made with half a heart, but *noblesse oblige*, to “save her the trouble.” Of course, the gentleman carves worse than the host—carving is a science, and success in it can be gained only by study and practice—‘more crest-fallen jokes—conversation flags—all watch him—he becomes more nervous and proceeds still more slowly—he explains that he is awkward—the guests wish he would not explain, as it delays him, and the remark is quite superfluous—his knife slipping, sends a leg dancing across the table, where it settles in a nimbus of grease upon the hostess’s lap—she assures him with a glare that she “does not mind ; on the contrary.” . . . The silence is deadly. . . . At last all are served, one of them having got all the meat, another all the gravy, and none of them any stuffing ; the carver then obtains a little

flabby scrap for himself, perfectly cold, just as all the other plates are removed.'

As for the rest of the company, they probably get enough to eat, but they have other sorrows. They are obliged, by the stern law of etiquette, to sit alternately, men and women. Few of them, if any, are well matched; the host and hostess having no other idea of assorting and coupling their guests than according to their social rank and precedence. A young votary of the æsthetic, with lorn look, limp figure, and tight-clinging robe, is seated next to a jovial squire, whose notions of the æsthetic never rise above his turnip-field. A strict High Churchman, fresh from vespers at St. Werburga's, is temporarily yoked with a fair Agnostic who has abandoned all faith, except in herself. A stolid worshipper of the antiquities, whose motto is, 'Whatever is, is wrong,' has become the partner of the daughter of a Radical M.P., who is dangerously clever about Home Rule, the obstinacy of the landed interest, and a vote for everybody. Young Pumpkin, of the 107th, has 'taken down' Miss Marrow, of an uncertain age, and has collapsed before her volley of questions, *de quibusdam rebus et multis aliis*. Generally a strange want of tact is shown in leading the conversation. No attempt is made to throw out subjects on which all, or nearly all, the guests may have something to say, nor, by judicious questions, to interest them, one after the other, in the interchange of speech. So, by degrees, the conversation breaks up into a number of separate dialogues, interrupted occasionally by some chance or inopportune remark, blurted out by host or hostess, when he or she haply calls to mind that something is expected from them—that, at the dinner-table, England expects every host or hostess to do his or her duty.

Few hosts or hostesses remember how much of the success of an entertainment rests not upon the cuisine, or the floral decorations, or the display of plate or glass, but upon the skill with which they combine the heterogeneous elements of the company they have assembled. Apart these are apparently antagonistic. So are lemon and sugar and whisky and water, but skilfully combined, they make punch. A clever hostess will soon fuse the materials into some degree of unity. And it is incumbent upon her or the host, or upon both, to effect this result; they are responsible; it was their volition that brought

so many portentous atoms into contact ; and they are bound to prevent them from flying off from one another at a tangent. Of themselves, their tendency is centrifugal ; it is reserved for the attractive power of the entertainers to imbue them with a centripetal force. A man who feels that he has no capacity for such work should never give a dinner-party ; he will be the happier, and his might-have-been guests will be the happier, for his abstaining.

I hold it true, whate'er befall, that our modern dinners are generally failures ; and I appeal to my readers to say whether the sight of a dinner-card does not fill them with unspeakable agony. They must accept the invitation, or offend where they do not want to offend ; yes, they must go, but what they must suffer ! It is a forlorn hope—without the glory. You cannot even flatter yourself that your presence and your suffering will benefit your host ; you know that the day afterwards he will be writhing with the consciousness of *un coup manqué*, and that he will be angry with every one of his guests for having witnessed it. The only thing that can ensure success is just that supreme talent for managing individuals which is so exceedingly rare. It is on record that Emile Ollivier and his cabinet plunged into the German war with a 'light heart'—well, the result was—Sedan. So, too, these dinner-givers, who enter so lightly upon their hazardous and arduous task, they, too, must have their Sedans. It is possible, if they have any intelligence, that they will learn by experience, and convert defeat into victory—unhappily, it must be at the cost of much suffering on the part of their friends.

'Tis 'thou art the cause  
Of our anguish,' good fellow !

The authority already quoted thus disposes of this melancholy subject :—'To the gourmand, who cares only for the dishes, our dinners are a failure ; for they are not sufficiently long for him, there is too little variety in the viands, a decided falling-off of late years in the wine-bibbing, and the courses are whisked away before he can quite assure himself of their flavour.' Some people's dinners, by the way, are all decoration and no substance—as full of flowers as an Irish M.P.'s orations. 'To the girl who hopes to see, and be seen, they are a failure ; for everyone knows that the close and formal arrangement of heads at a dinner, together with the general glitter of the

table—arranged with a view to dazzle, not to set off, the diners—prevents the fairest face from “telling.” Pictures packed close never tell as those do which are arranged some feet apart; a human face requires even more care, more space, more repose in its background to set it off, and no pretty woman ever makes a due impression at a dinner-table.’ Does any woman ever look pretty at a dinner-table? Eating is not a graceful process, and few women do it gracefully. ‘The meal is equally a failure to the ordinary people, who look upon it as it should be looked upon—an opportunity for those who can seldom meet at any other time to spend a few pleasant hours together. It is very proper that dinner should be the time fixed for these social gatherings. A company, like individuals, must meet on some common basis, on some equal footing. Everybody can eat; therefore eating is a good common basis. But to make a number of people happy whose faculties do not begin and end upon that very moderate basis, there must be other bases supplied. Food is a good one to begin upon, but not to begin and end upon.’

We must, however, in spite of reproach and lamentation—we must still give, and go to, dinners. *Noblesse oblige*—that is, Society commands us—and few of us have the courage to defy Society. Yet, in secret, the cry of despair arises, and many there be who feel inclined to address their persecutors in mournful accents, thus:—

Ask me no more : the morn may dim the sea ;  
 And Saxon eloquence in Irish eyes  
 Bid the salt tears of penitence arise :  
 But oh, my host, how can I answer thee ?  
 Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer *can* I give ?  
 Oft have I suffered at thy prandial board,  
 And scarcely yet to health am I restored !  
 Ask me no more, if thou wouldst have me live ;  
 Ask me no more.

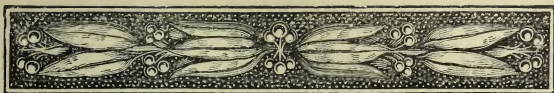
Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are seal'd :  
 I would have dined at home, but all is vain :  
 My fate compels me to thy board again :  
 Enough, dear host, reluctantly I yield ;  
 Ask me no more.

The moral of all this is, that people who give dinner-parties should, in the future, strike out a new line. Hitherto, the



dinner has been a kind of Juggernaut, to which the guests have been remorselessly sacrificed. The object with most hosts and hostesses is either to discharge as promptly as possible what they conceive to be a duty incumbent upon their position, or to exalt and aggrandise themselves by an ostentatious entertainment. In the first instance, they reason that, because A. and B. and C. have made D. miserable, *argal*, D. must make A. and B. and C. miserable. In the second, they do not ask themselves how they shall provide for the pleasure and comfort of their guests, but to whom they shall exhibit the evidences of their wealth; forgetting that, at the same time, they exhibit, in the most conspicuous manner, their vulgarity and absolute want of taste. I humbly suggest that more should be thought of the guests, and less of the dinner.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE BALL.

‘ Youth and Pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.’

BYRON,

‘ The music, and the banquet, and the wine—  
The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers—  
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments—  
The white arms and the raven hair—the braids  
And bracelets ; swan-like bosoms, and the necklace,  
An India in itself, yet-dazzling not  
The eye like what it circled ; the thin robes,  
Floating like light clouds ’twixt our gaze and heaven ;  
The many-twinkling feet so small and sylph-like. . . .  
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,  
Its false and true enchantments . . . Art and Nature.’

IBID.

Bliss of the Ball—Its Drawbacks and Qualifications—Balls and Balls—Luxury and Expense—Form of Invitation—Requisites and Elements of Success—Decorations—Flowers—Method of Lighting—The Floor—Musical Instruments—Distribution of Dances—Ball Scene in ‘ Daniel Deronda ’—Ball-room Flirtations—Proposals—Engagements—The Morning’s Repudiation—Mrs. Barrett Browning—The Refreshment-room—The Supper-room—Its Provisions and Decorations—Lines from Keats’s ‘ Eve of St. Agnes ’—A Roman Supper—Moderation in Dancing—To take Leave, or not to take Leave—General Rules—Lord Byron.



HE ball is the paradise of youth and love. When we have turned forty, and begin to feel the effects of sitting up o’ nights, and have a reasonable dread of rheumatic twinges, and are secretly conscious that a figure ‘ inclining to corpulency ’ does not show to advantage in minuet or quadrille, we regard it as a weariness and a delusion, and are ungrateful enough, perhaps,

to denounce it as fit only for fools. But in the happy spring-time of life, when the brain is fertile in pleasant fancies, and the heart throbs with unexpressed hopes—when every day brings with it a new pleasure, and every night a new reason for looking forward with joyous anticipation to the morrow—when our energies are as exhaustless as our spirits, and no sense of fatigue or weariness can oppress us, the ball-room becomes an enchanted world of light and music and perfume, into which that ubiquitous ‘black care’ of the Roman poet durst not intrude, where sorrow is never seen, and past and future are forgotten in the innocent intoxications of the present. To the young ear, what so delightful as merry music? To the youthful eye, what so attractive as the spectacle of fair forms gracefully revolving in the soft, sweet mazes of the mystic dance? And if we know that ‘at the ball’ we shall meet that ‘other half’ of one’s self—Romeo or Juliet, as the case may be; but Romeo without his melancholy, and Juliet without her tragedy—can it be wondered at that it draws us thither with an irresistible attraction? Ah, when the noontide comes, and already the shadows of evening gather over our downward path, how will remembrance bring back to us the days when it was bliss to touch one beloved hand, to take one trusting form in our reverent embrace—when it was joy untold for Romeo and Juliet to tread the painted floor together, and with close-linked arms to circle round and round to the strains of Strauss or Gungl? And then, in the pauses of the dance, the brief whisper on the cool balcony, or beneath the broad palms of the conservatory! And last of all, the privilege of draping those graceful shoulders with the protecting shawl, and the last sweet pressure of clinging fingers as Juliet passed into the carriage that was to bear her from our wistful gaze! Is there one of us who, in our later years, does not feel and know the truth of that fine passage of Emerson’s in one of his earlier essays:—

‘Be our experience in particulars what it may, no man ever forgot the visitations of that power to his heart and brain which created all things new; which was the dawn in him of music, poetry, and art; which made the face of Nature radiant with purple light, the morning and the night varied enchantments; when a single tone of one voice could make the heart bound, and the most trivial circumstance associated with one form is put in the amber of memory; when he became all eye when

one was present, and all memory when one was gone ; when the youth becomes a watcher of windows, and studious of a glove, a veil, a ribbon, or the wheels of a carriage ; when no place is too solitary, and none too silent, for him who has richer company and sweeter conversation in his own thoughts than any old friends, though best and purest, can give him ; for the figures, the motions, the words of the beloved object are not, like other images, written in water, but, as Plutarch said, “enamelled in fire,” and made the study of midnight.’

‘Thou art not gone being gone, where’er thou art,

Thou leav’st in him thy watchful eyes, in him thy loving heart.’

It is while we are subject to the ‘visitations’ of that power of Love, which invests the commonplace with so sweet and rare a romance, that balls are delightful, and ball-rooms as fascinating as the New Atlantis or the island of Calypso. And therefore, my dear sir, when you feel disposed to grumble at the domestic revolution which has converted your library into a tea-room, and stripped your drawing-room of its whilom decoration, and filled the ante-chamber with Godfrey’s band, and crowded your modest staircase with vases of fragrant flowers, bethink you of that golden age when you moved heaven and earth for invitations to the balls at which the fair Leonora had contrived to prepare you for her appearance ! Do not begrudge to your sons and daughters that cup of innocent pleasure of which you yourself have drunk right eagerly. Balls are not wholly free from alloy : they are not without the fell looks of jealousy, and the furtive glances of suspicion, and the hiss of wounded vanity ; but what are these compared with the full flood of happiness which they pour into so many tender bosoms and manly hearts ? I was very fond of balls—*consule Planco* ; and not of balls only, but of impromptu dances and those delightful informal little parties which, in well-regulated families, always end with a dance ; and, though stern moralists condemn them, I confess I never could, nor can I now, detect their impropriety. Nor know I any pleasanter sight than that of a well-lighted room, echoing with merry music, in which a number of young men and maidens, the latter attired in bright and semi-diaphanous robes, their eyes shining with pleasure, and their rosy lips curved with happy smiles, are ‘threading the mazes’ of the old-established quadrille, or circling round in the fascinating waltz. If you can dance no longer, my friend

look on, and be happy in the happiness of others. And if you have reached middle age, you ought not to dance ; dancing is for the young ; and nothing can be more ridiculous than the appearance of a stout gentleman of fifty, or a scraggy female of years unknown, capering and prancing along with 'sweet seventeen' or blushing one-and-twenty. No ; the elderly must reserve themselves for special occasions, such as the annual Christmas or New Year family gathering, when Paterfamilias and his spouse may fitly lead the country dance, as did Mr. and Mrs. Wardle and Mr. Pickwick on that famous Christmas night at Dingley Dell.

There are balls—and balls. This may seem a trite, but is really a profound, remark, in which is embodied the whole philosophy of the subject. For example : I read in the columns of a fashionable journal that Mrs. So-and-So had 'a crowded party' in Lancashire Square. 'The back of the house was converted into a fairy garden, with ice, palms, cascades, and lakes full of lilies.' I read of another, that 'the house was beautifully decorated, the especial feature being a rockery of ferns and ice, illuminated with coloured lights. The garden was lighted up with arches of lanterns.' Of another entertainment, I read that the floral decorations were confined to roses, and that the guests wore no other flowers but roses. Again I read : 'Last week Captain N—— and the officers of the gunnery-ship at Harbourmouth gave a most successful afternoon party, all the arrangements being of the most elaborate and complete description. The upper deck of the *Anaximander* was converted into a ball-room, and at the foremast a sort of tent was arranged (for non-dancing guests), profusely decorated with exotics and ornamented with arms and flags. The magazine was used as a promenade between the dances, and ladies were to be seen reclining on shells with their feet on torpedoes, the machine-guns being utilised as tea and strawberry tables. On the poop was a cool-looking arbour, in which the band was stationed. The refreshment-tables on the main-deck extended the whole length of the ship.' Balls such as these can be given only by members of the Upper Ten Thousand, owing to the heavy expenditure they necessitate. In my humble opinion, they are a mistake, for, instead of serving to bring young people together for an innocent and graceful amusement, their chief object is to display the wealth



and luxuriousness of the ball-giver. An entertainment to which some three hundred or four hundred persons are invited may fairly be called 'public,' and to public balls many grave objections may justly be raised. I prefer those properly called 'private balls,' at which the number of guests is sufficient to impart an air of novelty and not so large as to assume a miscellaneous character, at which every person present is well known to and is able to receive and appreciate the attentions of the hostess. Under no circumstances can a ball be other than expensive, but it is better to limit the expense, so as to admit of its repetition, than to lavish upon one entertainment an outlay which compels you to stint your amusements for the rest of the season.

We will assume, however, that for good and sufficient reasons you have decided to give a ball. Your first care is to issue your invitations, and therefore you must at once decide upon the style of ball you intend to give. Is it to be 'a crush,' that is, will you fill your rooms to overflowing, so that to find room for dancing in such a crowd is as hazardous as to cross the Valley of Balaklava under the fire of Russian guns? Is it to be simply a 'large ball,' that is, over a hundred and under two hundred guests? or 'a ball' proper, say from fifty to a hundred? or 'a dance,' say twenty to fifty? You will be guided in your decision, if you are sensible, by the space at your disposal and the pecuniary resources absolutely at your command. Do not ask more guests than you can make comfortable, nor more than you can entertain without embarrassing yourself by the cost. When you have settled on the number, draw up your list, including in it only 'eligibles,' that is, persons who *can dance*, and taking care that there shall be as many gentlemen as ladies. You will also invite about a third more than you can accommodate, to allow for disappointments. The invitations must be sent out three weeks in advance, and may either be by engraved card: 'Mrs. ——— requests the favour of Mr. ———'s company, on Friday, the —, at 10 o'clock,' with the word 'Dancing' in the left-hand corner, and the address in the right-hand; or may be written as follows: 'Mrs. ——— requests the favour of Mr. (or Miss) ———'s company at a dance on Friday, the —, at 10 o'clock.' Invités who do not send an excuse in a day or two may be considered as accepting.

Having secured your guests, you must next address yourself to the task of giving them a becoming welcome, and, for this purpose, you will want ample space, good light, good music, a good dancing floor, tasteful decorations, and refreshments satisfactory both in quality and quantity. If possible, your ball-room should be on the drawing-room floor, and if it open on a conservatory so much the better ; if on a balcony, the latter, by a judicious use of flowers and evergreens, may be converted into a temporary 'bower.' The fireplace should be filled in with ferns and exotics, which may be built up with Virginia cork into any pretty fanciful shape your ingenuity can devise. The walls should be ornamented with a fresh, light paper and draped with lace curtains, and in the corners may be placed a statuette, or a small fountain of perfumed water, or a bed of flowers. Floral decorations cannot be too abundant ; in the winter you will use evergreens. The staircase leading up to the ball-room should be made into an alley of plants, shrubs, and flowers, and flowers must also lend their freshness and fragrance to the cloak-room, the hat-room (for gentlemen), and the refreshment-room. Endeavour to secure a thorough ventilation, so that your guests may not suffer from the fatigue and depression engendered by a heated atmosphere. As for the lighting, it should be done by brackets from the walls, for gasaliers are dangerous. Wax tapers, so arranged that they shall not drop on the shoulders of your guests, or colza or argand lamps, with soft white globes to subdue the glare, are preferable to gas. The conservatory, balcony, and staircase may be illuminated by coloured lamps or Chinese lanterns.

It will be seen that I lay great stress on the decoration of the ball-room, and who would introduce a number of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen into a dull, dim, heavy apartment, as sombre as the dining-rooms of the olden times ? To render dancing thoroughly enjoyable the conditions should be carefully studied, all around should be brightness and sweet odours—the frame should be worthy of the picture. We read of a ball-room, the walls of which were 'completely hidden with drapery, ropes and wreaths of evergreens, cases of birds and animals, vases of flowers, and mirrors, large and small ;' and though in this case the decoration may have been on a scale too large for ordinary purposes, the principle underlying

it was the right one. Nor need the application of it involve any very great expense, if the hostess and her daughters bring their taste and dexterity into play. Of course if they entrust the decoration to professional hands the work will be well done, but the outlay will be very considerable, and there is no reason why as good an effect should not be produced at much smaller cost, if they draw upon their own energies, with one or two capable assistants. The main materials employed should be drapery and flowers, which are readily manipulated by ladies' fingers.

As for the floor, it should be well polished or covered with a diaper cloth or 'dancing drugget.' 'You should hire a man,' says an erudite authority, 'who, with a brush under one foot and a slipper on the other, will dance over the floor for four or five hours till you can almost see your face in it.'

The music for a small private ball may consist of a piano and violin, or a piano, violin, flute, and harp, according to the size of the ball-room. The musicians should be placed on a raised platform at one end of the room, and the platform may be ornamented with evergreens and pots of flowers. You will, of course, arrange your dances beforehand, and print the programme on a double card, with the dances on one side, and on the other a blank space to be filled up with the names of partners. To each card, which should be given to the guest in the ball-room, let a small pencil be attached. The number of dances may vary from sixteen to twenty-four, supper forming a break in the middle. There should be about as many waltzes as quadrilles, half as many galops, one or two polkas, a minuet, a mazurka, and a cotillon. It is customary for the hostess to lead off the first quadrille. The young ladies of the house must see that the dances are promptly formed, and should not themselves dance until all their friends are provided with partners. For this purpose they are at liberty to ask any gentleman present to be introduced to a partner, but, as he is bound to accept the invitation, they must exercise due care in their selection. No lady will engage herself two-deep for any dance, nor will she, except in novels, throw over a partner she has once accepted for any new-comer, however 'desirable.' The rules of politeness hold good in the ball-room, as elsewhere. If a lady do not wish to dance, she must decline with some polite excuse, and never with a direct refusal; and, after having re-

fused one gentleman, she must not agree to dance with another. The gentleman, when introduced, makes no elaborate speech, but murmurs a complimentary phrase, 'May I have the pleasure of your hand for the next dance?' or, if she be engaged for the next, he may ask her to enter his name in the first space on her engagement card.

It is not usual for a young lady to dance more than twice or, at the utmost, thrice with the same gentleman in one evening, unless she has some particular motive for drawing upon her head a disagreeable amount of attention. A gentleman will not fail to dance with the ladies of the house, and, if he have a good heart, he will take pity upon one or other of those less favoured damsels who, too often, are allowed to sit in neglected solitude.

There is a ball-room scene in George Eliot's 'Daniel Deronda.' Do you recollect it?

Gwendolen Harlech, the heroine—of course you remember that self-willed, passionate beauty—did not look the worse, we are told, under the chandeliers in the ball-room, where the soft splendour of the scene and the pleasant odours from the conservatory could not but be soothing to the temper, when accompanied with the consciousness of being pre-eminently sought for. Hardly a dancing man but was anxious to have her for a partner, and each whom she accepted was in a state of melancholy remonstrance that she would not waltz or polka.

'Are you under a vow, Miss Harlech?' 'Why are you so cruel to us all?' 'You waltzed with me in February.' 'And you who waltz so perfectly!' were exclamations not without piquancy for her. The ladies who waltzed naturally thought that Miss Harlech only wanted to make herself particular, but her uncle, when he overheard her refusal, supported her by saying :

"Gwendolen has usually good reasons." He thought she was certainly more distinguished in not waltzing, and he wished her to be distinguished.

'Among the remonstrant dancing men, however, Mr. Grandcourt, the great prize in the matrimonial lottery, was not numbered. After standing up for a quadrille with Miss Arrowpoint, it seemed that he meant to ask for no other partner. Still, Gwendolen noticed that he did sometimes quietly and gradually change his position according to hers,



so that he could see her wherever she was dancing, and if he did not admire her—so much the worse for him.

'Later in the evening, Gwendolen had accepted Herr Klesmer as a partner, and the two became quite friendly, until she begged to be deposited by the side of her mamma.

'Three minutes afterwards her preparations for Grandcourt's indifference were all cancelled. Turning her head for some remark to her mother, she found that he had made his way up to her.

"May I ask if you are tired of dancing, Miss Harlech?" he began, looking down with his former unperturbed expression.

"Not in the least."

"Will you do me the honour—the next—or another quadrille?"

"I should have been very happy," said Gwendolen, looking at her card, "but I am engaged for the next to Mr. Clintock—and, indeed, I perceive that I am doomed for every quadrille; I have not one to dispose of." . . .

"I am unfortunate in being too late," he said, after a moment's pause.

"It seemed to me that you did not care for dancing," said Gwendolen. "I thought it might be one of the things that you had left off."

"Yes, but I have not begun to dance with you." . . .

"I begin to think that—my cavalier has forgotten me," Gwendolen observed, after a little while. "I see the quadrille is being formed."

"He deserves to be renounced," said Grandcourt.

"I think he is very pardonable," said Gwendolen.

"There must have been some misunderstanding," said Mrs. Davilow. "Mr. Clintock was too anxious about the engagement to have forgotten it."

'But now Lady Brackenshaw came up and said: "Miss Harlech, Mr. Clintock has charged me to express to you his deep regret that he was obliged to leave without having the pleasure of dancing with you again. An express came from his father, the archdeacon; something important: he was obliged to go. He was *au désespoir*."

"Oh, he was very good to remember the engagement under the circumstances," said Gwendolen. "I am sorry he was called away." It was easy to be politely sorrowful on so felicitous an occasion.



“Then I can profit by Mr. Clintock’s misfortune?” said Grandcourt. “May I hope that you will let me take his place?”  
“I shall be happy to dance the next quadrille with you.”

This is the kind of conversation—only somewhat neater and sharper in expression—which one often hears in the ball-room, and it fairly enough indicates the feelings with which a young lady sometimes gets rid of an unwelcome partner. Is it necessary to say that she must take care not to betray them? *Noblesse oblige*: in the ball-room, as in all other spheres, and on all other stages, we must be guided by the golden rule of courtesy, to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us, and to spare their self-love, their susceptibilities, as we wish others to spare ours.

After every dance, the cavalier will offer his arm to his fair partner, and propose to conduct her to the refreshment-room. If she decline, he will escort her back to her chaperon or party, procure a seat for her, and before he goes in quest of another dancer, murmur some pleasant words of acknowledgment of the pleasure he has derived from her condescension. It is not ‘good form’ to pay particular attention to any one lady, unless it is understood that between her and her satellite an understanding exists, the customary prelude to a formal engagement. There are opportunities, no doubt, in the balcony, or in the conservatory—or behind some accommodating cluster of palms and ferns—of brief but delightful converse between ‘young men and maidens,’—the exchange of those ‘honeyed nothings,’ which sound so eloquent to interested ears. I have no faith, however, in the love which springs up or matures in the ball-room; I do not believe in its constancy, and I am sure it is wanting in that deep respect which underlies all *true* love. Yet I am told that ‘proposals’ have been made and accepted in this gay scene, while the air has rung with the soft strains of the waltz or the vivacious rhythm of the polka. Words so serious should be seriously spoken, in a fitting place and at a fitting time; and I would fain have every maiden whose love is so lightly demanded answer, next day, in the language of Mrs. Browning:

“Yes,” I answered you last night;

“No,” this morning, sir, I say:

Colours seen by candle-light

Will not look the same by day.

- ‘ When the viols played their best,  
Lamps above and laughs below,  
*Love me* sounded like a jest,  
Fit for *yes*, or fit for *no*.
- ‘ Call me false or call me free,  
Vow, whatever light may shine,—  
No man on your face shall see  
Any grief for change on mine.
- ‘ Yet the sin is on us both ;  
Time to dance is not to woo ;  
*Wooing light makes fickle troth*,  
Scorn of *me* recoils on *you*.
- ‘ Learn to win a lady’s faith  
Nobly as the thing on high,  
Bravely, as for life and death,  
With a loyal gravity.
- ‘ Lead her from the festive boards,  
Point her to the starry skies ;  
Guard her, by your truthful words,  
Pure from courtship’s flatteries.
- ‘ By your truth she shall be true,  
Ever true, as wives of yore ;  
And her *yes*, once said to you,  
SHALL be Yes for evermore.’

From pathos to bathos there is but one step. From this wise warning to thoughtless lovers we pass on to the refreshment-room, where the hostess will have provided light wines, sweets, cooling drinks, and ices. It must be understood that to linger here would be an impertinence, and to partake immoderately an unpardonable offence. Supper will, of course, be laid in another room. The cavalier takes thither the partner with whom he is dancing when supper is announced ; finds her a seat ; waits upon her until her few small wants are supplied ; then escorts her back to the ball-room ; and offers his services to any lady who may not have found ‘ a guide, philosopher, and friend.’ Having satisfied the laws of courtesy, he may then consider the demands of his own appetite.

As to the supper itself, all will depend of course on the taste of the hostess and the skill of the cook. The table should be decorated as freely as for dinner. Everything should be served up cold, and ready carved. There should be ices of many kinds, fowls and birds, pâtés and jellies, trifle and mayonnaise, champagne, sherry, hock, seltzer-water, and the all-satisfying Bass. What other ‘ cates ’ and ‘ dainties ’ may grace the board,

I leave to the fertile invention of my lady readers, reminding them *en passant* of the *petit souper*—forgive these French phrases—which Keats's Porphyro prepared, in golden dishes and baskets bright of wreathed silver, for his beautiful Made-line :

‘A heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon ;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd  
From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,  
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.’\*

There is here, perhaps, an excess of sweetness, as in Mr. Swinburne's alliterative erotics—a surplusage of smoothness, as in the honeyed verse of the poet of ‘The Earthly Paradise’—but yet in the midst of bright eyes and waltzing music, of floating robes and tresses, and wreaths and garlands of flowers, ’twould be more suitable than the strange succession of queer viands which loaded the supper-table of a Roman patrician. Take, for example, the supper which Lentulus gave to Glaucus : how it would astonish the inhabitants of Belgravia and the denizens of Mayfair ! Nine guests reclined on the triclinium, the most honoured being placed lowest in the middle couch. As soon as all were in a reclining posture, the attendant slaves removed their sandals, and comely pages carried round water in silver basins, in which each guest daintily dipped his fingers. Then, at a signal from the host, the servants deposited the dishes of the first course in the centre of the table. The chief ornament of this course was a bronze ass,—its panniers filled with olives,—on the back of which rode a Silenus, exuding from his pores a sauce which fell upon the roast breast of a young sow. Among the other delicacies were sausages on silver gridirons, with Syrian plums and pomegranates beneath in imitation of pie ; and vegetables, shell-fish, snails, and lizards, served up in silver dishes. To wash down this fare the guests drank a beverage called *mulsum*, compounded of wines and honey. Next appeared on a small tray, a carved figure of a brooding hen. The eggs from beneath were handed round to the guests, and proved to be made of dough, on breaking which with the spoon a fat figpecker was revealed in the pepper-seasoned yolk. This luscious morsel having

\* ‘Eve of St. Agnes.’

been despatched, each guest had recourse to the *mulsum*, or to pure Falernian without any tempering of honey. A wild boar graced the second course—a wild boar stuffed with countless little sausages; and while the guests were partaking of this lordly dish, a sudden noise was heard overhead: the ceiling opened, and a large silver hoop, to which were suspended tiny bottles of silver and alabaster, silver garlands with beautifully wrought leaves, and circlets and other trifles, descended upon the table; and after the dessert, prepared by the new cook, whom Lentulus had purchased for a hundred thousand sesterces, had been served up, the party rose, to saunter along the marble colonnades, or take a bath before all again assembled in the brilliant saloon.

What a supper! *O dura Romanorum ilia!* It is evident enough that the Romans were not *dancing men*; such a repast would have incapacitated them for waltz or polka for many a week!

Supper over—or, at least, your part in it—you return to the ball-room, and in due order fulfil whatever engagements you may have contracted. Some resolute and enthusiastic dancers foot it through the entire programme of a score and more of dances; the wise man and the prudent young lady will not exceed one-half that number; they will be rewarded for their abstinence on the morrow. At a large ball it is not necessary, when you retire, to take leave of the hostess; but this is a duty not to be omitted when you have been present at that less formal affair yclept ‘a dance.’ So you go your way, a happier man, it is to be presumed, than when you entered upon ‘the glittering scene;’ for either you have availed yourself of fresh opportunities of sweet converse with the ‘queen of your soul,’ or you have, perhaps, seen for the first time a face that will henceforth haunt your memory, and listened to a voice that henceforth will be as music in your ears; or, at all events, you have enjoyed an hour or two of pleasant companionship under all the conditions that can make such companionship delightful. Ah, Youth, make the best of your time! It is sunshine now, and music, and fragrance; life is radiant in the purple light of hope and love. But the years are ever envious of human happiness, and will not tarry by us. The spring will soon be past, and summer also; and then come the faded leaves and broken

dreams of autumn, when we no longer take pleasure in the blithest strains that ever stirred the feet of the dancer, and the waxen floor and the garlanded walls become to us a weariness and a sham !

I have said nothing about dancing, because that is a subject for professional teachers. For my own part, I do not like to see a gentleman dance *too well* ; he does not want to be taken for a dancing-master. It is enough if he dance *like a gentleman*, without that constraint, that *gêne*, which most Englishmen seem to experience, so that they look as if they were performing a task, or as if they felt they were making fools of themselves. For heaven's sake don't dance out of time ! That would show you have no ear for music, and, moreover, 'twould embarrass your partner. And don't go through your steps with the prim and deliberate air of a board-school prodigy repeating the names of the rivers in Mesopotamia. Use your hands and feet as if they belonged to you, and not as if you had hired them for the occasion, and were afraid of wearing them out. Do not assume the grave air of Lord Justice X. when he is engaged in solving some abstruse legal problem ; but, on the other hand, avoid that vacant, silly, stereotyped smile which the ladies of the ballet seem to think it *de rigueur* to display. Unless you are entirely self-possessed, have a good figure, and know what you are about, you should confine your efforts to the modest quadrille, and not venture upon the prancing polka or the bounding valse. Remember that no spectacle under heaven provokes more laughter than a bad dancer floundering round a ball-room, exposed to the sharp criticisms of pitiless bright eyes and relentless rosy lips. A man can never recover from the shame in which such an exposure involves him.

On the whole, I think I may commend to my male reader Byron's description of a good dancer, as indicating the excellences he should affect and the errors he should avoid. The poet is speaking of his naughty hero, Don Juan :—

‘ And then he danced ;—all foreigners excel  
 The serious Angles in the eloquence  
 Of pantomime ;—he danced, I say, right well,  
*With emphasis, and also with good sense—*  
 A thing in footing indispensable ;  
 He danced without theatrical pretence,



Not like a ballet-master in the van  
Of his drilled nymphs, but *like a gentleman*.

‘Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,  
And elegance was sprinkled o’er his figure ;  
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm’d the ground,  
And rather held in than put forth his vigour ;  
And then he had an ear for music, sound,  
Which might defy a crotchet critic’s rigour.  
Such classic *pas*—sans flaws—set off our hero,  
He glanced like a personified Bolero.’





## CHAPTER V.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF DRESS.

‘The glass  
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.’  
SHAKESPEARE.

‘Costly the habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not expressed in fancy ; rich, not gaudy.’  
*Ibid.*

Importance of Dress as a Social Agent—Its Use and Abuse contrasted—A Man’s Dress an Index to his Character—Illustrations—How far we may consult the Caprices of Fashion—Masculine Dress of the present Day—Leigh Hunt’s Invective against ‘Things as they were’—The Philosophy of Dress conveyed in Twenty-two Axioms, amended and adapted from ‘Pelham’—Economy and Consideration in Dress—Our Dress should be Suitable to our Means, Age, and Social Position—Richard Brathwait on the Becoming—The Etiquette of Dress—Ladies’ Dress : a Mystery—Its various Changes—Mrs. Oliphant on the Ladies’ Dress of To-day—Principles by which it should be Regulated—Ben Jonson’s Advice—The Grace of Simplicity—Ruskin upon Dress—Robert Herrick upon Dress—On Harmony of Colouring—The Classification of Colours—Colours, and how they should be Worn—Dress for Dinner Parties—Court Dress for Ladies—Description of Dresses actually Worn in the present Season—At Balls, Weddings, Races, State Concert, Garden Party—A Protest against Exaggeration.



So long as the present constitution of Society endures, Dress must always remain a matter of importance ; and rightly so, for it is a duty we owe to others as well as to ourselves to make the best of our personal appearance. There is at least as much affectation in slovenliness as in over-dressing ; the vanity of Alcibiades may have been shown in the purple and fine linen in which he was arrayed, but the pride of Diogenes was not less conspicuous in the holes of his cloak. A man who does not dress well when he can afford to do so must either be mean

and miserly, or a fool. An ill-fitting coat is no mark of genius, but simply a sign that you do not or will not employ a good tailor. Unquestionably, extravagance in dress is a vice and a folly, but so is excess in eating and drinking ; and as you do not give up the practice of eating dinner because some men eat too much, there is no reason why you should dress badly because the fools of Fashion dress to an extreme. The law of moderation applies to Dress as it does to Diet. I have as little patience with the foppery of cheap clothes and nasty as with that of fine clothes and costly. To care not how you dress is as much a mistake as to constitute dress the chief object of your thoughts, and make your tailor indispensable to your existence.

After all, a man's dress is still, to some extent, an index to his character. Study his hat, his coat, the fit of his trousers, the shape of his boots, and you will arrive at some notion of his taste and judgment. This might also be true of a lady's dress, almost without reference to the consideration whether the capricious despotism of fashion curtail or tighten her habiliments, or widen or protract them to a redundancy. It is often asserted that nowadays all classes dress alike ; the clerk like the peer, the wife of a London tradesman like the wife of blue-blooded patrician. Is it so ? The various articles of which their attire is made up—its component parts, so to speak,—may be the same, but they differ in that undefinable something which is the impress made on a person's dress by a person's character. You can tell the gentleman from the snob, however they may be dressed ; they *wear* their clothes differently. And Mrs. Smith from 'Olborn 'Ill, resplendent in silks and satins, is detected by her garb, even before she opens her mouth and scatters about her h's. 'As the index tells us the contents of stories, and directs to the particular chapter, even so,' says an old writer, 'does the outward habit and superficial order of garments (in man or woman) give us a taste of the spirit, and demonstratively point (as it were a manual note from the margin) all the internal quality of the soul ; and there cannot be a more evident, palpable, gross manifestation of poor, degenerate, dunghilly blood and breeding, than a rude, unpolished, disordered, and slovenly outside.' Why, in the choice of the pattern of a man's trousers you may see something of the 'internal quality of his soul !' It is for this reason

that our novelists always insist so strongly on the *dress* of their heroes and heroines ; they feel that the mind influences the apparel ; that a lady's temper betrays itself in her bonnet, and a man's disposition in the cut of his coat. Who does not remember Colonel Newcome's 'Stultz coat, a blue swallow-tail, with yellow buttons, a very high velvet collar, with a high waist, indicated by two lapelles, and a pair of buttons high up in the wearer's back ?' George Eliot draws a strong contrast in the dress of Dorothea Casaubon and Rosamond Lydgate. 'Let those who know,' she says, 'tell us exactly what stuff it was that Dorothea wore in those days of mild autumn—that thin white woollen stuff soft to the touch and soft to the eye. It always seemed to have been lately washed, and to smell of the sweet hedges—was always in the shape of a pelisse with sleeves hanging, all out of the fashion. Yet if she had entered before a still audience as Imogene or Cato's daughter, the dress might have seemed right enough : the grace and dignity was in her limbs and neck ; and about her simply parted hair and candid eyes the large round poke which was then in the fate of women, seemed no more odd as a head-dress than the gold lumber we call a halo.' Against this striking picture let us put 'Rosamond's infantine blondness and wondrous crown of hair-plaits, with her pale blue dress of a fit and fashion so perfect that no dressmaker could look at it without emotion, a large embroidered collar, which it was to be hoped all bachelors would know the price of. Her small hands, duly set off with rings, and that controlled self-consciousness of manner which is the expressive substitute for simplicity.'

The reader will not forget the exquisite picture which Tennyson draws of Rose, the Gardener's daughter :

'One arm aloft—

Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the shape—  
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.'

'Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the shape'—the line seems to assist us to a conception of Rose's dainty innocence and spotless purity.

No doubt, in our dress we must be governed to some extent by Fashion ; we must restrict our individuality in order to be decent like other people. But I contend that the theory I have laid down is justified by the results of everyday experience ; and that a man's dress is still a trustworthy index to his charac-

ter. There is a wide and deep philosophy of clothes, as Teufelsdröckh has shown us ; and we may even go so far as to say that the habits and disposition of a *nation* are shown in its style of dress. Look at our English costumes of the present day? Are they not those of an active, majestic, vigorous people, who delight in bodily exercises, and travel wide and far? Who can conceive of the dress of our eighteenth century ancestors as adapted for mountain-climbing, or wilderness-exploring, or for any pursuit or occupation in which agility is an essential? There can be no doubt as to the gallantry and pictorial value of the Vandyck dress, with its large hat and waving feathers, its short cloak and jewelled rapier, and its long breeches meeting the top of the wide boots ; but was it a costume in which Englishmen could have conquered India or made themselves masters of Africa ?

A good deal of cheap rhetoric has been expended on the dress—and more particularly the men's dress—of the present day. Granted that it is not particularly picturesque (though I think 'the knickerbocker' might commend itself to an artistic eye) or graceful, I claim for it the merits of simplicity, comfort, convenience. You may go anywhere and do anything in it. It is easily thrown off, easily put on ; it is cleanly and neat, and sufficiently becoming. Think of the cocked hats, the long waistcoats, the ugly formal coats, the tight knee-breeches of the gentlemen of the Georgian era—or of the thick folded cravats, the short vests, the long coats of the age of Brummel, and congratulate yourself, my friend, that you live in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Take up an engraving of one of Hogarth's pictures, or a caricature by Gillray, and tell me whether you are not thankful that your stalwart manly figure is not encased in the ugly and indecorous attire which is therein represented. It is only forty years ago that Leigh Hunt penned a most caustic diatribe against the fashion of masculine clothes then in vogue. Speaking of the 'modern coat,' he exclaims, 'What a thing it is ! what a horse-collar for a collar ! what snips at the collar and lapelles ! what a mechanical and ridiculous cut about the flaps ! what buttons in front that are never meant to button, and yet are no ornament ! And what an exquisitely absurd pair of buttons at the back !' Rising into indignant eloquence, he cries out:—'There is absolutely not one iota of sense, grace, or even economy in the



modern coat. It is an article as costly as it is ugly, and as ugly as it is useless. In winter it is not enough, and in hot weather it is too much. It is the tailors' remnant and cabbaging of the coats formerly in use, and deserves only to be chucked back to them as an imposition in the bill.'

Even this warm outburst of anger does not satisfy our author, and he continues :—'The coat, as it now exists, is a mere nuisance and expense, and disgraces every other part of the dress, except the neckcloth. Even the hat is too good for it, for a hat is good for something, though there is more chimney-top than beauty in it. The coat is a sheer piece of mechanical ugliness.'

Leigh Hunt adds :—'The neckcloth is worthy of the coat ;' and *certainly* it is astonishing how our fathers and grandfathers could consent to swaddle their throats in such yards of linen ! 'Some man with a desperately bad throat must have invented the neckcloth, especially as it had a *padding*, or *pudding*, in it when it first came up. His neck could not have been fit to be seen. It must have been like a pole or a withered stalk, or else he was some faded fat dandy ashamed of his double chin. . . . The neckcloth is ugly, is useless, is dangerous to some, and begets effeminate fear of colds with all.'

Here we may reproduce the maxims of Pelham, embodying, as they do, what may be called, a 'Coxcomb's Philosophy of Dress.'

1. *Do not require your dress so much to fit as to adorn you. Nature is not to be copied, but to be exalted by art. Apelles blamed Protogenes for being too natural.*

Our present dress, however, is adapted rather to the purpose of fitness than that of adornment. We do not wear our clothes with the view of dazzling or surprising others, but for our own convenience.

2. *Never in your dress altogether desert that taste which is general. The world considers eccentricity in great things genius, in small things, folly.*

Moreover, it will pardon to genius much which it will not pardon to commonplace. A small poet can better afford to imitate Tennyson in his blank verse than in his shovel hat and Spanish cloak.

3. *Always remember that you dress to fascinate others, not yourself.*

It would be wiser to say : ' Always remember that you dress not to disgust or surprise others, and to *suit* yourself.'

4. *Keep your mind free from all violent affections at the hour of the toilet. A philosophical serenity is perfectly necessary to success. Helvetius says justly that our mere aims form our passions.*

It is difficult to believe that the process of pulling on a dress-coat and black trousers can raise any violent affections ; though, if they do not happen to fit, they will probably induce an explosion of impatience.

5. *Remember that none but those whose courage is unquestionable can venture to be effeminate. It was only in the field that the Spartans were accustomed to use perfumes and curl their hair.*

6. *Never let the finery of chains and rings seem YOUR OWN choice : that which naturally belongs to women should appear worn only for their sake. We dignify foppery when we invest it with a sentiment.*

It is best to wear but little jewellery : a man never looks to less advantage than when he enters into competition with a jeweller's shop-window. The love of charms, and trinkets, and rings is a survival of barbarism.

7. *To WIN the affection of your mistress, appear negligent in your costume ; to PRESERVE it, assiduous ; the first is a sign of the PASSION of love ; the second, of its RESPECT.*

Our sole comment on this maxim we shall borrow from Mr. Burchell in the ' Vicar of Wakefield '—' Fudge !'

8. *A man must be a profound calculator to be a consummate dresser. One must not dress the same whether one goes to a minister or a mistress, an avaricious uncle or an ostentatious cousin ; there is no diplomacy more subtle than that of dress.*

9. *Is the great man whom you would conciliate a coxcomb ?—go to him in a waistcoat like his own. ' Imitation,' says the author of ' Lacon,' ' is the sincerest flattery.'*

It is a flattery, however, which many people do not relish. I have observed that most ladies regard with displeasure the imitation by one another of little peculiarities and originalities of costume.

10. *The handsome may be showy in dress ; the plain should study to be unexceptionable : just as in great men we look for something to admire ; in ordinary men we ask for nothing to forgive.*

But just as a great man can be content to trust to his own greatness, and make no ostentation of it, so even a handsome man—or a gentleman—dispenses with showiness; he has that in himself which passeth show.

11. *There is a study of dress for the aged, as well as for the young. Inattention is no less indecorous in the one than in the other; we may distinguish the taste appropriate to each, by the reflection that youth is made to be loved—age to be respected.*

This maxim is one to be warmly commended and endorsed. One's moral feeling, one's sense of right and wrong, is shocked, when old age bedizens itself with the flowers of youth; when our grandmothers disport themselves in the costume proper to their granddaughters.

12. *A fool may dress gaudily, but a fool cannot dress well, for to dress well requires judgment; and Rochefoucault says with truth, 'On est quelquefois un sot avec de l'esprit, mais on ne l'est jamais avec du jugement.'*

13. *There may be more pathos in the fall of a collar, or the curl of a lock, than the shallow think for. Should we be so apt as we are now to compassionate the misfortunes, and to forgive the insincerity, of Charles I., if his pictures had portrayed him in a bob-wig and a pig-tail? Vandyck was a greater sophist than Homer.*

14. *The most graceful principle of dress is neatness; the most vulgar is preciseness.*

15. *Dress contains but two codes of morality—private and public. Attention is the duty we owe to others; cleanliness that which we owe to ourselves.*

16. *Dress so that it may never be said of you, 'What a well-dressed man!'—but, 'What a gentleman-like man!'*

It would be better, I think, to dress so as to call forth no remark at all. A popular journalist acutely remarks that 'when the woman is very pretty, one never looks at her dress; and when the toilette is very striking, one forgets to look at the wearer. In the first case, the dress is an adjunct to the woman; in the latter the woman is an accessory of the dress.' And he proceeds to relate an experience of his own at a ball given by Royalty. 'There was present,' he says, 'a perfect costume of dark sage-green and velveteen and old gold plush, the latter in small quantities. The man-o'-war cap was of old gold plush, and the manner of the whole get-up was as excellent

as the colouring. But what was the wearer like? Well, though I looked at her several times, I have not retained any idea of her. The dress effaced her! On the other hand, a very charming woman with dark eyes and hair of *real* gold, whose figure was absolute perfection, appears now, in my recollection of her, to have walked about in a kind of cloud of creamy whiteness, with a halo of the same, which I suppose must have been a bonnet or a hat, or perhaps a parasol.'

Men and women endeavour to attract notice by their dress only when they are aware there is nothing attractive in themselves.

17. *Avoid many colours; and seek, by some one prevalent and quiet tint, to sober down the others. Apelles used only four colours, and always subdued those which were more florid by a darkening varnish.*

It is one of the few things for which we have to thank the æsthetic craze that the love of showy, vivid colours has died out, and a wise partiality crept in for soft cool hues and quiet neutral tints. 'The fine full tones of blue and green, the bright pinks, the orange-yellow,' which once made our wives and daughters look like walking bits of rainbow, or as if they had heaped on their raiments the loudest colours on the painter's palette, are no longer to be seen, and harmony of tints is more highly prized than violent effects. It is possible to err in this direction, and one does not wish to see society dissolving away into vague neutral shades which almost escape the eye; still, even this would be better than the old extreme which attired it in all the showiness of a kaleidoscope.

18. *Nothing is superficial to a deep observer! It is in trifles that the mind betrays itself. 'In what part of that letter,' said a king to the wisest of living diplomatists, 'did you discover irresolution?' 'In it's U's and G's,' was the answer.*

Yet it must be a trifling mind which can allow itself to be absorbed in trifles; and the man or woman who devotes all his or her time and thought to dress should *make* it, not *wear* it!

19. *A very benevolent man will never shock the feelings of others by an excess either of inattention or display; you may doubt, therefore, the philanthropy both of a sloven and a fop.*

20. *There is an indifference to please in a stocking down at heel; but there may be malevolence in a diamond ring.*

21. *Inventions in dressing should resemble Addison's definition of fine writing, and consist of 'refinements which are natural, without being obvious.'*

22. *He who esteems trifles for themselves is a trifler; he who esteems them from the conclusions to be drawn from them, or the advantage to which they can be put, is a philosopher.*

Whether these maxims will be of any considerable service to the reader I will not conjecture; but they are certainly not without a certain amount of shrewdness and knowledge of the world. To me, however, it seems that the whole philosophy of dress, so far as the majority of 'respectable' and more than (but not less than) respectable people are concerned, may be summed up in much smaller compass. I should say, for instance, that, in the first place, a man's dress should suit his income. The alliteration of dress and debt too often carries with it the suggestion of a close relationship common enough in every-day life; yet, to plunge one's self into the slough of pecuniary despond simply for the sake of personal display appears so great a folly that it is difficult to conceive of its actual commission. It is everybody's duty to dress decently; but no one is required to dress 'better'—a vague and unmeaning phrase, incapable of analysis—than he can afford. A man's expenditure upon dress should bear a fixed and a moderate ratio to his income; but obviously this ratio must not increase progressively with the increase of his means. If he have £300 a year, he may spend £30 upon dress; if £500, he should not spend more than £40; if £1,000, he will not require to spend more than £60. In the multitude of counsellors there may be safety, but in the multiplying of clothes there is no glory. We do not estimate our neighbours by the number of coats they possess, nor is an additional pair of trousers an additional claim to our esteem. If a friend come to dine with me, I expect that he will do as others do, and don a dress-coat; but I don't require him to have three more dress-coats in his wardrobe at home.

Next, we should dress according to our age. To the thoughtful observer it is painful, to the caricaturist ridiculous, to see an elderly gentleman attired in the loose costume of youth, the lady of uncertain years flaunting about in the fanciful and free garments of 'sweet seventeen.' Grey hair, crow's-feet about the eyes, bent shoulders, and the generous



fulness of a 'fair round body with good capon lined,' do not harmonise with 'pot hats,' cut-away coats, turned-down collars, and tight pantaloons. The combination is not according to the eternal fitness of things. Let Youth wear the levities and fripperies of youth; while Old Age goes slowly and decorously, with a gravity that commands respect.

We should dress, also, according to our social position. There is a certain uniformity in all dress nowadays, it is true, and no such class distinctions exist as were recognised even as late as the last century. Duke and costermonger wear coats of the same 'cut;' the lady of rank and the seamstress's apprentice alike figure in dresses generally of the same form, if, indeed, it happen that the material of them varies. Yet a difference *does* still obtain, and we are continually meeting with persons of whom we say, 'They are dressed above their station,' and consequently above their means. No man with a limited income should aspire to a fashionable appearance. Let him be 'point-device in his accoutrements,' let neatness stand impersonated in him, let his clothes be of good texture and admirable cut, but let him keep within that class-limit which is easily recognised though not easily defined. Quaint old Brathwait discourses learnedly on this point:—

'Reproofe touching Apparell may be occasioned when any one weareth Apparell above their degree, exceeding their estate in precious attire. Whence it is that Gregory saith: There bee some who are of opinion that the weare of precious or sumptuous Apparel is no sinne; which, if it were no fault, the Divine Word would never have so punctually expressed, nor historically related, how the Rich Man, who was tormented in hell, was cloathed with Purple and Silke. . . . The second point reprehensible is, Softnesse or Delicacy of Apparell: Soft Cloathes introduce soft mindes. Delicacy in the habit begets an effeminacy in the heart. . . . The third thing reproveable is, Forraine Fashions: when we desire nothing more than to bring in some Outlandish habit different from our owne; in which respect (so Apishly-anticke is man) it becomes more affected than our owne. . . . The fourth thing reproveable is, Superfluity of Apparell, expressed in these three particulars: first, in those who have divers changes and suits of Cloathes; who had rather have their garments eaten by moaths, than they should cover the poore members of Christ. . . . Secondly, wee

are to consider the Superfluity of such [women] who will have long garments purposely to seem greater; yet, which of these can adde one cubit to her stature? This put me in remembrance of a conceited story which I have sometimes heard, of a diminutive Gentleman who, demanding of his Taylor what yards of Sattin would make him a suite, being answered farre short in number of what hee expected, with great indignation replied: "Such an one of the Guard, to my knowledge, had thrice as much for a suite, and I will second him." Which his Taylor, with small importunacy, condescended to, making a Gargantua's suite for this Ounce of man's flesh, reserving to himselfe a large portion of shreads, purposely to forme a fitter proportion for his Ganemede [Ganymede]'s shape. . . . The third Superfluity ariseth from their vanity who take delight in wearing great sleeves, misshapen Elephantine bodies, traines sweeping the earth, with huge poakes to shroud their phantasticke heads.'

As to the etiquette of dress, it is very simple; morning costume should be worn (by gentlemen) up till four in the afternoon; for full-dress matinées, concerts, 'at homes,' dinner parties, and balls, evening dress; that is, black dress-coat, waistcoat, and trousers, with white necktie. White waistcoats now are seldom worn, except by waiters. Let your clothes be of the best material and well-cut; economy as well as good taste confirms this recommendation. But it is in the quality (and quantity) of your linen that you can best show your appreciation of 'the Beautiful and True.' Do not wear shirts at 42s. per dozen unless you are obliged; let your collars, handkerchiefs, socks, under-garments, all be of good make and shape. Remember, too, that a gentleman is known by his boots; your 'snob' may put himself into a Poole's coat, but his awkward feet can never be inserted in a decent pair of boots. Don't affect singularity; let your head-covering resemble as nearly as possible that of other men, and, for goodness' sake, don't wear any garments brought out by advertising tailors and hosiers, and ticketed the Ajax scarf, or the Agamemnon necktie. Do not indulge in violent colours; let your walking-dress be a 'quiet' tweed of uniform shade, with a tie of neutral tint and a black hat. If you carry an umbrella, let it be one fit to hold over a lady's head in a shower of rain, with a neat, light handle simply ornamented. If you carry a stick, eschew the monstrosi-

ties in which 'Arry and Bob delight ; but on the other hand avoid the pitiful abortion of a school which distinguishes itself by aping simultaneously dandyism and decrepitude. If you are going to pay visits doff your tweed walking-coat or jacket, and don a neat frock-coat, which may be either black or a black-blue. Your gloves, of course, will fit you like your skin ; the best kid, of a colour to suit your clothes. As you are a gentleman, you will not be desirous of being mistaken for a groom, and therefore will not dress like one.

Something must be said, I suppose, about ladies' dress, but it is a subject which I, as a member of the stronger sex, approach with the utmost deference, if not with some mis-giving. It is so comprehensive, so various, so complex. It has, too, a technology of its own which no man, unless he be a Worth, can pretend to have mastered. A page of a 'Fashion Book will puzzle him more than a chorus of Æschylus !' And, besides, its changes are so sudden and so incomprehensible ; at one time the feminine skirt is expanded like a balloon, at another it is compressed and confined like a sack. At one time the bodice is worn high and close about the neck, at another it is as free and liberal as Nora Creina's. There is the gown of the present day ; I do not think Mrs. Oliphant has criticised it a jot too severely, and I intend to quote her criticism. But who knows ? By the time this book is in the reader's hands it may have been discarded, and the female form divine may once more be enclosed in an ample ring-fence of crinoline. Here, however, is Mrs. Oliphant's diatribe, which I quote because, being written by a lady and a lady of undoubted culture, it cannot be ignored on the ground that it springs from masculine incompetency :

'Instead of flowing as a long skirt ought to do, it is painfully bound in across the body like the swaddling-clothes which are so pernicious to infants ; but worse than these, for no swaddling-clothes that were ever invented confined the limbs ; and the bondage of this dress at times reaches, or is said to reach, the extravagance of preventing movement altogether, so that a lady in full dress can hardly walk, can with difficulty get upstairs, and cannot by any possibility sit down. We think it proper to add that this *is said to be* the case. We have never had the bad fortune to see an actual example which had attained this climax of impossibility. All excessive fashions,

however, belong to a small class; and the great majority of womankind (as of mankind) are blamed for sins and absurdities committed by the few, and of which the many are entirely innocent; so that we do not presume to deny the fact so generally insisted upon. But the general approach to such a state of affairs is more dangerous than one extreme instance of extravagance now and then. We have never seen a lady who could not sit down, but we have seen many with, as the poet describes, "two shy knees tied in a single trouser," and the trouser itself so tightly strained that even the slim person of a girl was pulled into unnecessary protuberances. This is so far from being a pleasant spectacle that we cannot wonder at the bitterness of the criticism it has called forth. The effect upon elderly women whose persons are neither slim nor small is proportionately terrible.'

If a male creature may be allowed to offer an opinion, I would say that the so-called *Princesse* dress was the gracefullest and most becoming outer garment for women introduced within the Victorian period. It was elegant in itself, and it 'became' everybody who wore it—the slender shaped girl and the buxom matron, always provided the latter allowed it a certain flowingness of outline and amplitude of scope. With such a dress as the *Princesse* I think ladies are well provided. For walking, however, they need a shorter skirt, reaching just to the ankle. With a skirt so shortened, they obtain all necessary freedom of movement, and are not called upon to envy their Turkish sisters—who, by the way, seldom walk at all—or to covet the baggy trousers invented by Mrs. Bloomer. I, for one, deny the superior grace or becomingness of the Turkish or Bloomer costume, which I believe to be in favour only with eccentrics, or with simple-minded females who have never seen it 'in real life.' Sure am I that critics of my own sex would give an unanimous vote in favour of the *Princesse* as opposed to the Oriental-American creation! Ladies of England, stick to that simple, flowing, decorous garment, which you have inherited from northern ancestresses; a garment which, when properly designed, is equally adapted for young and old, for Pharaoh's lean kine and Pharaoh's fat kine, for maid and matron, grand-daughter and grandmother; a garment which follows the general lines of the figure with sufficient closeness, while never hazarding



too plain an indication ; a garment which, with its tight-fitting bodice and graceful skirt, is probably as near perfection as it is possible for female humanity to attain !

As to the general character of a lady's dress, I suppose nothing more can be said than was said so finely and concisely by Ben Jonson more than three centuries ago ; for though the fashions of dress may change, the principles which should regulate it are immutable :—

‘ Still to be neat, still to be drest  
As you were going to a feast ;  
Still to be powdered, still perfumed :  
Lady, it is to be presumed,  
Though art's hid causes are not found,  
All is not sweet, all is not sound.  
Give me a look, give me a face  
That makes simplicity a grace ;  
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free ;  
Such sweet neglect more taketh me  
Than all th' adulteries of art :  
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.’

The grace of simplicity is not sufficiently studied by some of our leaders of fashion. On the contrary, they seem bent on challenging one another to a competition in extravagant ostentation, and not only cross the boundaries of simplicity, but even of modesty. Happily there are still thousands of English ladies who are not infected by this vicious love of luxury and show, who do not covet the distinction of being noticed in Society-papers or of attracting the attention of a crowd at public entertainments, who shun the meretricious honour of appearing in shop-windows photographed in a curious variety of dress and attitude. To dress for one's family circle—for one's parents, one's husband, one's lover, one's friends—to dress so that she shall please but not surprise, is all that a true woman will aim at. Nor will she adhere slavishly to the prevailing *mode*. She will not carry her individuality to eccentricity, but she will individualise the fashion, adapting it to her personal requirements, and restraining it within graceful and gracious limits. In some recent advice by Ruskin she will find much to meet her approval, as in all advice that is based on good sense and moderation.

‘ Dress,’ says Ruskin, ‘ as plainly as your parents will allow you, but in bright (if not glaring) colours (if they become you), and in the best materials ; that is to say, in those that will



wear longest. When you are really in want of a new dress, buy it (or make it) in the fashion; but never quit an old one merely because it has become unfashionable. And if the fashion be costly, you must not follow it. You may wear broad stripes or narrow, light colours or dark, short petticoats or long (in moderation), as the public wish you; but you must not buy yards of useless stuff to make a knot or a flounce of, nor drag them behind you over the ground. And your walking-dress must never touch the ground at all. I have lost much of the faith I once had in the common-sense and personal delicacy of the present race of average Englishwomen by seeing how they will allow their dresses to sweep the streets, as if it is the fashion to be scavengers. If you can afford it, get your dresses made by a good dressmaker, with utmost attainable precision and perfection.'

Your dresses should be made 'to fit,' not only as a matter of personal adornment (which, however, is by no means to be neglected), but because ill-fitting dresses provoke comment and draw attention; and it should be a lady's object to avoid everything that savours of publicity. For the same reason if it be well to follow the fashion, it must be done modestly, and without unnecessary outlay. I say, unnecessary outlay, because one of the great vices of English society at the present day is its extravagance, and women's extravagance is mainly shown in their dress, often with sad consequences to their husbands and themselves; with loss of self-respect, domestic peace, and even honour.

Your dresses should be made 'to fit;' but while neatness should govern your costume in all its parts, do not fall into the opposite extreme of rigid preciseness. I have seen ladies so tied and laced and pinned up as to convey the impression that if they moved the wondrous structure would perforce fall to pieces. I have seen others with every ribbon and flounce and furbelow so carefully arranged that you would think they had been working out Euclid's propositions in their silks and satins. Give Nature room to breathe and move. Relieve the formal regularity of your attire by the flow of a ribbon or the graceful lines of a bit of prudent lace. With Herrick I am inclined to say:

'A sweet disorder in the dress  
Kindles in clothes a wantonness;

A lawn about the shoulders thrown  
 Into a fine distraction ;  
 An erring lace, which here and there  
 Enthrals the crimson stomacher ;  
 A cuff neglected, and thereby  
 Ribbons to flow confusedly ;  
 A winning wave, deserving note,  
 In the tempestuous petticoat ;  
 A careless shoe-string, in whose tie  
 I see a wild civility ;—  
 Do more bewitch me, than when art  
 Is too precise in every part.'

In the masculine dress there is little or no opportunity for a contrast or harmonious combination of colours ; but this is a feature of the art of dressing which ladies will do well to study. The costliest materials will fail to produce an agreeable impression unless their colours have been carefully blended. Let us enter therefore into a few details. Colours are divided into three classes : *Primary*, that is, simple or uncompounded :—red, blue, yellow. *Secondary*, binary or compound colours, each of which is formed by the mixture of equal parts of two of the primaries :—purple (red and blue) ; green (yellow and blue) ; orange (red and yellow). And *tertiary*, binary or mixed colours, formed by the mixture of equal parts of two of the secondaries :—olive (purple and green) ; citrine (orange and green) ; russet (orange and purple). The neutral colours are the greys, browns, slates, drabs, and the like.

There is yet another division : make a splash of blue paint on a white ground, fix the eye steadily upon it for a minute or so, and then turn to the white, and you will see thereon a faint image of the splash, but the colour will be orange. The colour of any image or reflection of a primary is always that of the secondary ; and thus, as the colour of the object added to the colour of the reflection makes up the colours of a ray of white light, the colour of the reflection is called *complementary*. In other words, the complementary colour of any primary is the compound of the two other primaries.

*Primitive Colours.*

Red,  
 Blue,  
 Yellow.

*Complementary Colours.*

Green,  
 Orange,  
 Purple.

Colours are also divided into *warm* (yellow, orange, red, brown) ; and *cold* (olive, green, blue). Black and white, which,

scientifically speaking, are not colours, become warm or cold according to their position. *Tones* are the different degrees of intensity of which a colour is susceptible according to the admixture of white or black; but these are sometimes called *tints*, when mixed with white, and *shades*, when mixed with black. *Hues* are the 'brightnesses' produced by the mixture of two or more colours.

The object to be aimed at in dress is to secure a perfect harmony of colour. For this purpose, we must take one colour as the motive or basis of our dress, and work upon its varieties. To begin with *red*: this, as the predominant colour of a dress, could be worn by very few, but its numerous varieties are deservedly popular. Scarlet, for instance, is used to light up the neutral colours; it also harmonises well with white. Crimson requires white to soften it, or may be combined with blue and gold, or with purple and green. Claret agrees with gold or orange. So does maroon, which may also be used with green. Magenta is best set off by black. Cerise will attune with lilac, silver grey, pale lavender, or may be heightened by a dexterous use of gold and scarlet. As for pink, its delicacy renders it unsuitable for any but the most delicate complexions. The only decorations it will bear are in black or white or silver grey.

*Blue* is suitable to most persons, but should be softened by white when it comes in juxtaposition with the skin. How it looks when it stands alone may be seen in Gainsborough's famous picture of 'The Blue Boy.' It harmonises with its complementary, orange; but fire and water are not more discordant than blue and yellow. We can also combine blue with a warm brown, crimson, and gold, or with black and purple. Light blue is a trying colour, and by gaslight turns to pale green. When worn, it should be treated abundantly with white, or with grey or drab.

*Yellow* is sometimes effective with brunettes. Black goes well with it. But amber or orange is preferable; the former, especially, makes a handsome picture, as you may see in some of Titian's masterpieces. Primrose is fainter and more delicate; and may be treated with purple or cerise. A tall figure, inclined to paleness, may wear orange and black, or orange and purple.

*Green* is another difficult colour under gaslight, but may be

worn in the day with combinations of white and scarlet. For evening attire, it should be relieved with gold. Light green may be used with white, or brown, or dark green. Dark green is a favourite with the old painters, but requires to be relieved with white, and treated for colour with a little crimson.

*Purple* is the regal colour, and the *purpureum lunar* is the glory of the poets. It may be embellished with gold or orange, or a little amber, or even scarlet. White should be used to relieve it. Mauve, a new and popular variety, combines with cerise, white, and gold. For slight mourning it may be treated with black and white. Lavender, for half-mourning, requires black.

*Grey*, as a neutral colour, is generally useful and widely popular. You will remember that the wife of 'John Halifax, Gentleman,' always chose a rich soft grey for her principal dress. It may be enriched with bright colours, even scarlet or crimson, or treated with quiet tints.

*Drab* and *Fawn* are neutral colours, like grey, but somewhat warmer. They are susceptible of very various treatment, and may be heightened or toned down according to the wearer's fancy.

*Brown* is a good useful colour, which may be relieved by scarlet or dark blue or a touch of crimson. Charlotte Brontë represents her heroine, Caroline Helstone, on one occasion, as dressed 'in merino, the same soft shade of brown as her hair. The little collar round her neck lay over a pink ribbon, and was fastened with a pink knot.'

*Black*, when not worn as mourning, may be treated with crimson or white or a deep rich yellow. It is a colour almost always becoming and appropriate, gives dignity to a *petite* figure, and enhances the mien and bearing of a stately one. George Eliot says of Gwendolen, that 'in her black silk, cut square about the round white pillar of her throat, a black band fastening her hair which streamed backwards in smooth silky abundance, she seemed more queenly than usual.'

*White*, the colour of virgins and brides, is equally suitable for morning and evening dress; only the material will be different. White muslin or any kind of white cloth may be trimmed with scarlet, magenta, cerise, dark green, dark blue; white silk or satin, with pink or pale green or azure. To refer again to Gwendolen. At the archery fête she wore white cashmere, with a touch of pale green to suit her complexion. White

tulle and tarlatan may be worn over skirts of almost any colour.

A word or two as to the right kind of dress to be worn at the right time.

At dinner, a lady may wear blue, silver grey, maize, lavender, black, and even pale green ; the material should be silk, satin, or velvet ; the trimmings of Brussels, Mechlin, or Maltese lace. For jewellery, pearls may be freely used ; or emeralds or diamonds as a brooch or neck ornament. Flowers are a favourite 'garnish.' At a ball, the dress may be of satin, tulle, tarlatan : white tulle over white silk, or white tulle over pink silk, being an appropriate combination for the young. The hair should be coiffured with real flowers. There should be little jewellery. Married ladies may venture on richer and more elaborate costumes ; the young should trust to their youth and beauty.

Court dress is thus described by an authority of good repute :

It consists, first, of an entire dress, generally made of some plain but costly silk (occasionally, of velvet).

The dress, therefore, forms an important part ; next comes the petticoat, usually of some lighter material ; and, lastly, the train. The dress is always made low, and is now generally cut square ; the bodice is trimmed to correspond with the petticoat and the train.

The petticoat may be of tulle or Brussels or Honiton lace, and is often looped up with flowers.

The train is of the richest material of the whole dress. Formerly it was often of satin and is still, but the favourite material is *moiré* or *glacé* silk.

It fastens half round the waist, and is about three yards long and wide in proportion. All round it is trimmed with lace in festoons or along the hem, with bunches of flowers at intervals, and is usually lined with white silk.

The petticoat is ornamented with the same lace as the train : sometimes in flounces, sometimes in puffings or *bouffons* of tulle, and sometimes *en tablier*, that is, down either side.

The bodice and sleeves are made to correspond exactly with the train and petticoat.



The head-dress consists of feathers, and comprises a lappet of lace depending from either side of the head down almost to the tip of the bodice. Diamonds or pearls, or other jewels, may flash amid the hair, and similar ornaments may gleam on the bodice round the neck and arms.

The shoes should be of white satin, and trimmed *à la mode*. The fan should be strictly a dress fan, the gloves should button high above the wrist.

I transcribe from various sources a few descriptions of dresses actually worn at recent fashionable assemblies, in the belief that these will afford more direct instruction to my readers than any amount of general comment:

‘At *Balls* a great many white dresses are simply trimmed with coloured ribbons and flowers, foulard, faille, and satin in light colours, such as pale blue, pink straw, and Ophelia, the new shade, like a pink-tinted mauve, and are worn with white tulle and silk muslin overskirts.’

At a *Wedding* I read of ‘one lady in dark-green velvet, with a large bunch of crimson roses fastened on the shoulder;’ of another, ‘in violet silk;’ another, ‘in a soft pale shade of lavender, and damask roses in her bonnet;’ of another, ‘in sapphire velvet and old point;’ yet another, ‘in chocolate and cream;’ another, ‘in gold and wine colour;’ and another, ‘in salmon and ruby brocade, with bronze velvet.’

At a *Ball*:—‘White and gold brocade, with skirt of white satin, and a gorgeous coronet of diamonds.’ . . . ‘Cream satin.’ ‘Pompadour satin, with a crimson scarf arranged round the head.’ . . . ‘A black dress trimmed with jet, with a profusion of flowers.’ . . . ‘Black velvet trimmed with magnificent old lace.’

At *Ascot*:—‘A wonderful dress of white brocaded velvet, worn with a bonnet of real flowers.’ . . . ‘A white satin dress embroidered with black chenille and trimmed with a heavy fringe of white chenille and jet.’ . . . ‘A dress of some soft kind of semi-transparent stuff in a pale shade of primrose. The very large straw hat was trimmed with real roses. More roses on the dress and parasol.’ . . . ‘A ruff of coffee-coloured lace, in which nestles a garland of Marshal Niel roses; a tightly-fitting dress of velvet of the exact tint of the roses; a scarlet parasol, overshadowing a little crimped satin bonnet with more roses.’

At a *Wedding*.—‘A dark claret velvet embroidered with gold, and a heliotrope velvet with coffee lace and yellow roses.’

At *Hurlingham*.—‘For the most part the dresses were both becoming and pretty, a preference being shown for such pale tints as cream colour, primrose, and blush-rose pink, a shade that is almost white, but with a delicious warm hue thrown over it, silver grey, and maize. Heliotrope colour appears to have taken a new lease of popular favour. “Quite a fourth of the costumes,” says a Society journal, “had some mixture of this tint, if not consisting entirely of it. An olive-green velvet dress of a pale shade opened over a petticoat of gathered heliotrope satin. The bonnet was made of heliotrope blooms and pansies in various shades of mauve and violet, with pale sage-green leaves; and the parasol was of heliotrope satin, embroidered with heliotrope flowers and pansies in chenille, a material that gave a velvety softness to the embroidery.”’

At a *State Concert*.—‘The Princess of Wales wore myrtle-green velvet and satin; and Princess Christian violet brocade and mauve satin trimmed with lace; the Duchess of Connaught, cream-coloured satin trimmed with brown lace; the Duchess of Teck, dark-blue velvet and satin; the Duchess of Marlborough, brocaded Irish poplin; and the Duchess of Westminster, sky-blue satin, with jacket of lace, and an immense bouquet of red roses. Lady Grosvenor was in white and silver.’

At a *Garden Party*.—‘Olive-coloured satin shot with pale blue, waistcoat of the latter colour, and bonnet of olive;’ . . . ‘grey satin, with fichu and trimmings of Indian muslin, and grey satin bonnet with white feather;’ . . . ‘black and gold;’ . . . ‘dark-blue velvet;’ . . . ‘white silk with black trimmings.’

In dress, as in all other things, I repeat that the error mainly to be avoided is exaggeration. It is pitiful to see how many there are whose constant object appears to be to push the fashion to an extreme, who are never satisfied unless all eyes are drawn upon them by their *prononcé* and outrageous costume. Startling contrasts of colour and wild eccentricities of shape are what their souls delight in. They lie in wait, as it were, for something new, and whenever it appears hoist the signal of innovation without giving any thought to its fitness or elegance, its con-

veniency or grace. This ostentation of waywardness is quite inexcusable in the young, because youth is in itself a charm and always looks best when undisguised in its fair simplicity. The sweet freshness and beautiful purity of youth needs no adventitious embellishment; like the poet's Pyrrha, it is *simplex munditiis*. 'For dowagers and married women it is another story. They may have to repair the ravages of time, or to conceal imperfections which in youth are overlooked. But even they only make matters worse if they attract attention to themselves by the exaggerated use of any prevailing fashion. If it be easy for the young to dress well, because nothing comes amiss to them; it is difficult for their elders to do so, who will not accept the fact that they are no longer young.' There is a great art in being able to recognise one's position, be it what it may. The sight of an old woman, wrinkled and grey, decked out in every colour of the rainbow and adorned with artificial flowers, affecting a youth which has slipped away from her long ago, is enough to make the observer sad; while there is something attractive in the sight of one who does not care to fight against her age and infirmities, but who, dressing simply, soberly, and quietly, accepts gracefully the fact that she is old and can discern a blessing in the calm and hush of old age. But the worst exaggeration is that which leads society to imitate the *demi-monde*—which attires a pure young maiden in the style rendered notorious by some brazen adventuress. When fashion runs riot in the monstrous, the ugly, the inconvenient, it is possible for the cynic to laugh without much bitterness; but when it indulges in the suggestive, in that trespassing on the bounds of indelicacy which is euphoniously designated 'fast,' the laugh grows savage indeed, and he may be pardoned an outburst of indignation at the madness, the wickedness of such a procedure. To the pure all things are pure, in the sense that all their surroundings, all their motives, all their thoughts and feelings must be pure.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

‘The study of books is a languishing and feeble motion, that heats not, whereas conference teaches and exercises at once. . . . I love stout expressions amongst brave men, and to have them speak as they think.’—THOMAS FULLER.

Quotation from William Melmoth—Advantages of Interchange of Opinion—Dangers of Intellectual Isolation—Reciprocal Formation of Judgment—General Rules for the Use of Talkers—A Caution against Compliments—Avoid Calumny, Exaggeration, Ill-nature, Misrepresentation—An Anecdote of a Good Listener—Conversation in Modern Society—An Apology for Ball-room Small Talk—The Art of Talking Platitudes well—Small Talk and very Small Talk—Casting Pearls before Swine is Unprofitable—Hints for Talkers in Miscellaneous Company—Frivolity and Vapidity of Ordinary Conversation—Dean Swift upon Conversation—Talking too Much—Talking of One’s Self—Repeating Old Jokes and Old Stories—Interrupting Others and being Interrupted—The Witty Element of Conversation and Small Talk—The Small Talker and the Dinner Table—Very Small Talk—The Age of the Great Talkers is Past—Luther, Scaliger, Perron, Ménage—Lord Bacon as a Talker—Lord Bacon on Conversation—Ben Jonson, Selden, Dr. Johnson—Walpole, Chesterfield, and some other Great Talkers—Sydney Smith and the Charm of his Conversation—A Warning against ‘Talking Shop’—Know when to be Silent—Hannay on the Talk of To-day.



THE art of conversation is one which boasts not only of a magnificent, but even of a sacred charter: ‘Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.’ ‘As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.’ (Proverbs xxvii. 17, 19.)

Thomas Fuller, who supplies the motto of this chapter, has some fine passages about conversation, as tending to correct prejudice and to dissipate the errors of opinion formed in

solitariness. Their sense is to a great extent embodied in a more modern and condensed form in a passage by William Melmoth, the translator of the *Letters* of the younger Pliny and the author of *Letters on Literary and Moral Subjects*. 'It is with much pleasure,' writes Melmoth, 'I look back at that philosophical week which I lately enjoyed; as there is no part, perhaps, of social life which affords more real satisfaction than those hours which one passes in rational and unreserved conversation. The free communication of sentiments amongst a set of ingenious and speculative friends, such as those you gave me the opportunity of meeting, throws the mind into the most advantageous exercise, and shows the strength or weakness of its opinions with greater force of conviction than any other method we can employ.'

'That "it is not good for man to be alone," is true in more ways of our species than one; and society gives strength to our reason as well as polish to our manners. The soul, when left entirely to her own solitary contemplations, is insensibly drawn by a sort of constitutional bias, which gradually leads her opinions to the side of her inclinations. Hence it is that she contracts those peculiarities of reasoning, and little habits of thinking, which so often confirm her in the most fantastical errors; but nothing is more likely to recover the mind from this false bent than the counter-warmth of impartial debate. Conversation opens our views and gives our faculties a more vigorous play; it puts us on turning our notions on every side, and holds them up to a light that discovers those latent flaws which would probably have lain concealed in the gloom of unagitated abstraction. Accordingly, one may remark that most of those wild doctrines which have been let loose upon the world, have generally owed their birth to persons whose circumstances or dispositions have given them the fewest opportunities of canvassing their respective systems in the way of free and friendly debate. Had the authors of many an extravagant hypothesis discussed their principles in private circles, ere they had given vent to them in public, the observation of Varro had never, perhaps, been made (or never, at least, with so much justice), that "there is no opinion so absurd but has some philosopher or other to produce in its support."

'Upon this principle I imagine it is that some of the finest



pieces of antiquity are written in the dialogue manner. Plato and Tully, it should seem, thought truth could never be examined with more advantage than amidst the amicable opposition of well-regulated converse.'

It is not possible to teach an art of conversation. On the other hand, it is not difficult to lay down certain general rules, the observance of which must be held as indispensable to your success as a conversationalist in Society—that is, as a talker who talks not to display his wit or acquirements, but to promote the comfort of the company in which he finds himself.

1. For example, you must avoid all elaborate discussion of political and religious subjects. Our differences on these points go very deep, and any debate which forces them on our consideration cannot fail to awaken permanent feelings of irritation and dislike.

2. However much in the right, you must yield with a good grace when you perceive that persistence in ventilating your opinions will result in open variance.

3. To talk politics in the presence of ladies is generally a proof that the talker is deficient in tact as well as in politeness.

4. The true spirit of conversation consists less in displaying one's own cleverness than in bringing out the cleverness of other people. The person who quits your company satisfied with himself and with what *he* has said, will assuredly be quite as satisfied with you.

5. To listen well is almost as indispensable as to talk well; and it is by the skill with which he listens that the man of *bon ton* and of good society is known. If you wish people to listen to you, you must listen to them,—a French writer adds, 'or *seem* to do so;' but I cannot recommend any such insincerity or deception, which, moreover, I believe in the long-run will prove of no avail.

6. There is quite as much cleverness shown in listening well as in talking well.

7. Let not your patience give way when elderly people are garrulous. Respect old age, even when it twaddles: you yourself may live to require the indulgence which you are now recommended to exercise.

8. There are social Munchausens whose narratives make tremendous demands on your credulity. Do not express your belief in what you disbelieve, for that would be to utter a false-

hood ; do not express an open dissent, for that would be to commit a rudeness. Take refuge in a courteous silence, and—change the subject.

9. I do not know that I need repeat the minute advice of the author of the ‘*Manuel du Bon Ton*,’ that, when anyone is speaking, we should not yawn, or hum an air, or pick our teeth, or drum with our fingers on a piece of furniture, or whisper in a neighbour’s ear, or take a letter out of our pocket and read it, or look at our watch ; and yet the advice is not wholly unnecessary, for when a bore afflicts us it is difficult to avoid showing our *boredness*, and in our mood of disgust and weariness we almost unconsciously resort to various ways of relieving our feelings at the expense of our politeness. But even this impertinence sinks into the shade before the rudeness of interrupting a speaker, even if it be to expose a fallacy or correct a matter of fact, or to suggest a word or phrase to help him out of a slough of hesitation. Be sure that he whom you interrupt will never forgive you. You may take away a man’s character, and the chances are he will pardon you ; but if you wound his vanity, never !

10. Do not give another, even if it be a better, version of a story already told by one of your companions.

11. Be careful how you distribute praise or blame to your neighbours ; some of those present will have their prejudices or partialities, which you will be sure to offend.

12. Speak of yourself as little as possible. If you speak in praise, you expose yourself to ridicule ; if you blame yourself, nobody will think you in earnest, and it will be assumed that you are seeking for compliments, or that you are affecting an Uriah Heap-like humility ; or, if your vanity be excused, it will be at the expense of your intelligence,—if you are not vain, you must be stupid.

13. Do not ‘talk shop ;’ that is, unless specially requested, do not talk of your professional occupation, or private studies, or personal belongings ; neither of your house, nor your wife, your servant, your maid, nor your ox, nor your ass. Society will more easily forgive you for coveting your neighbour’s than for extolling your own. Obviously it is a work of supererogation ; for, if all that you have is all that you represent it to be, it will speak for itself ; and if it be not, your exaggerations will but direct the microscopic eye of criticism to its deficiencies.

14. Do not pay compliments, unless you can do so with grace, and in such a manner that, though the person on whom the sweet flattery is bestowed recognise it as undeserved, he or she may still believe that on your part it is perfectly sincere. Dean Swift says, pithily : ‘ Nothing is so great an instance of ill-manners as flattery. If you flatter all the company, you please none ; if you flatter only one or two, you affront the rest.’ But an elegant compliment at an opportune moment, and spoken with an air of frankness, carries with it an irresistible charm. Thus Chateaubriand, when an old man, met Rachel, the tragedienne, then in the first flush of her fame. ‘ What a pity,’ he exclaimed, ‘ to be obliged to die, when so much genius is making its appearance in the world !’ ‘ In some cases it may be so,’ answered Rachel ; ‘ but you know, sir, there are some who possess the privilege of immortality.’ That was a graceful turn of Sydney Smith’s, when the young lady asked him if he could not bring a certain pea to perfection. ‘ No,’ he said ; ‘ but,’ and he took her by the hand, ‘ I can bring perfection to the pea.’ If you can frame such elegant speeches as these, my dear sir, go on and prosper ; but, I pray you, remember that an awkward compliment is next of kin to an open insult.

15. In a stormy discussion, do not commit yourself to either side—in *medio tutissimus ibis*. I need hardly observe, that if everybody acted on this golden rule, there would be *no* stormy discussions, to the great advantage of Society. Truth lies in a well, I suppose, because it is always calm down there !

16. Gesticulate as little as you can while speaking, lest you should be mistaken for a bad actor. Some people spread out their fingers like fans ; others point them at you menacingly, like so many darts ; this man emphasizes his speech by bringing down one unfortunate hand into the palm of the other ; that man nods his head like a child’s toy figure, and carries his arm up and down like a pump-handle. Oh, reform it altogether.

17. In a general conversation, never attempt to joke with your superiors.

18. Never make fun (as it is called) out of personal defects. Think of the children who mocked at Elijah. ‘ Go up, thou bald head, go.’

19. No gentleman uses an oath at any time ; nor will he sprinkle his conversation with *équivoques*, indelicate allusions, or *double entendres*. Remember St. Paul’s caution : ‘ Let no

corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.' If a man let down his bucket into a well, and bring up dirty water, we know what must be at the bottom.

20. If not through goodness of heart, at least through prudence, abstain from any remark coloured by exaggeration, calumny, ill-nature, misrepresentation. Do not speak in epigrams. You cannot say a smart thing of any person without being offensive. Douglas Jerrold was a great wit, but he was a man of singular rudeness, and no doubt made many enemies. When a member of his club, hearing a favourite air mentioned, exclaimed: 'That always carries me away when I hear it,' Jerrold retorted: 'Can nobody whistle it?' This was very funny, but it was not very courteous. On another occasion, a gentleman, in a railway carriage, was descanting on the beauties of Nature. 'In reading in the fields,' he said, 'sometimes a cow comes and bends its head over me. I look up benignantly at it.' 'With a filial smile,' said Jerrold. Even if such impertinences be forgiven in a wit, they will not be forgiven in persons who are not witty but only ill-natured.

21. Lastly, do not talk *too much*. Even the listeners and admirers who gathered round Macaulay longed occasionally for 'flashes of silence;' and with inferior conversationalists the desire for some interruption of the flow of talk becomes infinitely stronger. Oh the misery of it when some inordinate gossip gets you by the button-hole and drums away at your aching tympanum with an incessant crash of prattle! It is a flood, resistless, overwhelming! You feel as if drowned in it; at first you struggle, and gasp, and clutch at this reed and at that, but in vain—the waters continue to rise until you are overwhelmed. A good story is told of a certain clever lady of fashion, who was one of those relentless and irresistible conversationalists. Some unkind friends, resolved to compensate themselves for their sufferings by mercilessly exposing her, asked permission to introduce to her notice a young gentleman of unusual ability. She consented, and very graciously received him; but before he had time to open his mouth she launched into the stream of talk, discussing all kinds of topics, and pelting him with volleys of questions to which she allowed him no opportunity of making a reply. At last the gentleman moved, and took leave.

'Well, what do you think of him?' inquired his introducers.



‘A very agreeable man, and most intelligent ; it is long since I have met anyone so thoroughly well informed.’

‘Your judgment is quite correct,’ was the reply. ‘Poor fellow ! he has only one fault, or rather misfortune. ’Tis sad that one so agreeable and well-informed should be—deaf and dumb !’

It cannot be said that Society affords many opportunities for conversation, properly so-called. Nowadays, amusements are so many that our time is cut up into a number of little pieces, not one of which allows of the feast of reason and the flow of soul. A Sydney Smith or a Macaulay, a Curran or Erskine, would have been puzzled to begin or carry on any intellectual fencing in the brief space allowed to a *matinée* or a kettledrum, a picnic or a garden-party. There is time, perhaps, for a little persiflage, a repartee or two, a gay allusion, a veiled compliment, but not for any grave and serious discussion of any great and serious topic. So I fear that the race of Great Talkers is dying out, and conversation becoming more and more the property of the *flaneur* and the flirt. Would it were otherwise—but in London Society the obvious tendency is to reduce conversation to something as unsubstantial and vague as the melting snow-flake. Of course, there are times when what may be termed full-bodied conversation would be as much out of place as full-bodied port—when light airy talk befits the situation and supplies the want. While you and your partner are waiting your turn in the quadrille you can hardly be expected to discuss mysteries as grave as those which the Archangel Gabriel discussed with Adam. While driving down to Richmond with Laura and Kate, a dissertation on the English system of Land-tenure may be fairly considered out of place. When helping a pretty girl up the rocks at Tunbridge Wells, I am not prepared to deliver a lecture on *Æsthetics*. The universal fitness of things would be outraged by such conversational monstrosities.

A great deal is said about the inanity of Ball-room conversation ; and I am not inclined to defend it. Indeed, I am certainly of opinion that a couple of liberally well-educated persons should be able to say something moderately sensible to one another ; but it should not be forgotten that the difficulties are many which lie in the way of holding any intelligent connected discussion at all in ordinary ball-rooms, during the



periods of the waltz and the intricacies of the quadrille. 'In the first place,' as a recent writer observes, 'two people are introduced to each other who have never met before, and, it is very likely, will never meet again. Under the hopeless conditions of heat, rapid exercise, excitement, and often fatigue as well, these two are thrown together into a sort of public *tête-à-tête*, neither having the smallest clue to the tone of the other's mind, and neither possessing, as far as they know, any ideas in common. Is it worth while trying to find kindred topics for the ten minutes or quarter of an hour that their companionship lasts? Surely the mental exertion is too great, and it is scarcely surprising that, under circumstances so unfavourable to conversation in its higher sense, ball-goers should save themselves trouble by falling back upon "stock subjects," should reiterate platitudes night after night, and "lock-up" their intellectual abilities.'

What ball-goers want is the art of treating platitudes with grace and freshness, just as a skilful cook converts the commonest materials into piquant dishes. It should not be impossible for a well-educated young Englishman to entertain his partner 'for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour'—not with the higher conversation, but with lively and pertinent remarks on the topics of the season. Surely it is not necessary that he should degenerate into meaningless babble about 'Shakespeare and the musical glasses.' And his partner may reasonably be expected to assist him by the vivacity and good sense of her replies. Unfortunately, the English *demoiselle spirituelle* is too often given to mistake sauciness for wit: as in *Punch's* sketch, where a shy young man is overwhelmed by one of these irrepressibles, who demands of him: 'Pray, sir, have you *no* conversation?'—a question which would make any reply almost impossible.

The writer already quoted observes, with much good sense, that society is, and always must be, to a certain extent, frivolous. It is intended for recreation, not for work; for relaxation, not for fresh application; it is the playground of civilisation, where a great deal of what children call 'make-believe' necessarily goes on; where all of us are more or less distinctly acting parts, and hiding our real selves under a fanciful mask. It is hardly to be expected, therefore, that a very elevated conversational standard will either be aimed at or sustained. And while

young men remain what they are, I think it may be taken for granted that a lady's success in the ball-room will depend more on her good looks, grace of manner, and pleasantness of speech, than on her intellectual powers or conversational gifts. A pair of bright eyes will outshine the highest mental endowments ; now, as ever, young Paris gives the golden apple to the fairer, to Aphrodite and not to Pallas—*detur pulchriori*. 'Tis pity it is true, perhaps ; and yet, after all, we do not all of us go to the ball-room to seek a wife, a partner for life, but a partner for waltz or quadrille ; and a good dancer, for the nonce, is of more value to us than a female wrangler. There is no reason, indeed, why Pallas should not assume the graces of Aphrodite—why the female wrangler should not dance like a sylph ; but until this consummation is arrived at, sylphs will be more popular than wranglers in ball-rooms, and the conversation will not rise above the sylph-level !

The basis of all ordinary social conversation must necessarily be small talk : that is, it must, to a great extent, be talk upon small subjects. We cannot expect to find at a dinner-party, or an 'at home,' a group of people competent, at a moment's notice, to discuss the great subjects of human thought and speculation ; to investigate scientific problems ; or to inquire into those mutations of peoples and governments which make up the record of history. When Tennyson invited Frederick Denison Maurice to his island home, for the enjoyment of honest talk and wholesome wine, he set before the expected guest a varied and attractive bill of fare. The great wants of the day were not to be forgotten,

' Whether war's avenging rod  
Should lash all Europe into blood ;'

nor important social questions . . .

' How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings of the poor ;  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valour and charity more and more.'

But then, these were not for the entertainment of a miscellaneous company of guests ; they were reserved for two congenial spirits, the poet and his friend, whose minds and hearts were linked together by common interests and sympathies. You may probably remember Dr. Johnson's hints upon conversation—which no one was better able to throw out than the

greatest talker of his time—and you will know that in our social gatherings they can seldom be reduced to practice. We are to choose a conversational style proper to the company. . . Heaven help us when that company consists of young men of the crutch and toothpick school, old men who borrow their ideas from their favourite daily papers, and ‘the milky rabble of womankind!’ . . . The scholastic we are to use only in a select company of learned men. The didactic is to be seldom employed, and only by judicious aged persons, or those who are eminent (who is to decide their eminence?) for piety and wisdom. No style, we are assured, is more extensively acceptable than the narrative, because this does not carry an air of superiority over the rest of the company, and therefore is most likely to please them; for this purpose we should store our memory with short anecdotes and entertaining pieces of history. Almost everyone, says Johnson, listens with eagerness to extemporary history. ‘Vanity often co-operates with curiosity, for he that is a hearer in one place, wishes to qualify himself to be a principal speaker in some inferior company, and therefore more attention is given to narrations than anything else in conversation.’ It may probably be thought that a succession of ‘narrations’ will hardly tend to exhilarate a company; but pleasure is not favourable to any effort in the direction of enlightenment. It is true, he admits, that sallies of wit and quick replies are very pleasing in conversation, but they frequently tend to raise envy in some of the company. And then, he adds, the narrative way neither raises this, nor any other evil passion, but keeps all the company nearly upon an equality, and if judiciously managed, will at once entertain and improve them all.

No doubt it would require to be ‘judiciously managed;’ but I imagine that the most judicious management would fail to make it acceptable to the ‘company’ we nowadays meet with at our social entertainments. In truth, what is said of the decline of letter-writing is true of the art of conversation. That art is fast dying out. The age of Great Talk has been succeeded by that of Small Talk. There is no time, as I have already pointed out, for the exhibition of conversational powers even if we possessed them. We are hurried to three or four parties in a night; and the numbers gathered at each makes general conversation impossible. We are forced to fall back upon our

neighbours—Sir Bashford Ruggles, a retired stockbroker, knighted because he presented a loyal address from some City Company, or Miss Cimabue Brown, who breathes nothing but ‘lilies and languor,’ and lives in a kind of mild æsthetic dream. It is to be observed that conversation will always sink to the average level of the company. You will soon find yourself delivering a monologue if you rise above the usual tone of thought and feeling of your companions.

I wish it were otherwise. It is my belief that few persons realise the entire vapidness and feebleness of the conversation in which day after day, and night after night, they take a part; and I feel sure they would be surprised, and I hope ashamed, if a shorthand writer’s faithful transcript of it could be brought before them. Let them ask themselves whether, next morning, they can remember that one wise or witty thing has been said, one great truth enforced or illustrated, one generous sentiment uttered. Two or three hundred people meet together at a reception, and the collision of their wits does not strike out a single spark! A dozen pairs of educated persons assemble round a friend’s ‘hospitable board,’ and are thrown into contact for two or three hours, and what is the result of it? No doubt, there *are* exceptions; no doubt, conversation still lingers in some small and select circles—in artistic and literary gatherings; but I am speaking of society generally, and I venture to say that the conversation of society is as silly as it is dull; that it seldom rises even to the standard of the dialogue in the Robertsonian drama.

This might easily be altered, if men and women would allow themselves to be more original. The majority of us, I am willing to believe, can discourse sensibly upon most subjects if we allow ourselves the chance. But society seems to have set the stamp of Fashion upon desultory and idle talk, so that to be a good talker is to earn the reputation of being an eccentric. Of late years, society has deliberately given itself up to the evil powers of Dulness and Folly; or when it ceases to be dull, it becomes indecorous. A hostess is more anxious to obtain the cheap notoriety of a paragraph in a Society journal, than to collect about her a group of friends capable of originating and sustaining an agreeable conversation. So she covers the walls of her reception-rooms with costly tapestries, or converts them into gigantic flower-shows, or fills them with women extrava-



gantly undressed, and 'honest talk and wholesome wine' no longer enter into the category of pleasures to be sought after and provided.

Dean Swift, with his keen eye for the foibles of his fellows, has put on record some faults in conversation that everybody who wishes to talk and talk well should make it his business to avoid.

He justly condemns the folly of talking too much. No one man in a company has any right to predominate in length and frequency of speech, any more than one player in an orchestra has a right to convert the performance into a solo. The most effective music is that in which each instrument has its proper share. And then these soloists are generally so wearisome ! How they wander from the main subject ; how they double back upon their old track ; how they strike out in this direction and in that only to plunge into a morass or be lost in a desert ; how they repeat the same thing, though as it was not worth saying at the outset, it is not made better by repetition ; and how they put down all interruption by the steady and irresistible flow of their platitudes ! But even if a man could talk like a Macaulay, he has no right to prevent others from talking. They have come not to hear a lecture, but to converse ; to talk as well as to listen ; to contribute as well as to receive.

Still more wearisome is the talk of those who will only talk of themselves ; whose everlasting 'I' recurs in their speech as certainly as the head of Charles the First turned up in the speech of Mr. Dick. They deluge their hearers with the milk-and-water history of their sayings and doings from childhood upwards ; and relate the annals of their diseases, with all the symptoms and attendant circumstances. To a talker of this sort, to have had the measles is a boon—the small-pox, an infinite delight ! He can make an hour's soliloquy out of an attack of asthma ; and a fit of cholera will carry him round a score of dinner-tables ! Others, as the Dean remarks, are more dexterous, and with great art will lie on the watch to hook in their own praise : 'they will call a witness to remember they always foretold what would happen in such a case, but none would believe them ; they advised such a man from the beginning, and told him the consequences just as they happened, but he would have his own way. Others make a vanity of telling their own faults ; they are the strangest men



in the world : they cannot dissemble ; they own it is a folly ; they have lost abundance of advantages by it ; but if you would give them the world they cannot help it ; there is something in their nature that abhors insincerity and constraint,—with many other insufferable topics of the same altitude.’

We should all of us wish to hear, I doubt not, Squire Hardcastle’s story about ‘grouse in the gun-room,’\* but when a man has only one story, and dins that story into your ears every time he button-holes you, you may be excused for finding it *de trop*. Variety is the life of conversation ; a good thing loses its goodness on repetition, just as claret and olives pall upon the palate when they enter into our daily fare. The most successful talker is the man who has most to say that is sensible and entertaining on the greatest number of subjects. A specialist can never make a good conversationalist ; his mind runs always in the same groove, and cannot be got to run in any other. He is like the man who had learned to paint for the innkeepers a ‘red lion,’ and by constant practice had acquired some degree of skill in this direction. When invited by a patron to paint him an elephant, he refused, and only after much pressure could be persuaded to consent, even then qualifying his consent by the remark that he doubted whether, when the elephant was finished, it could be distinguished from a red lion, after all ! The specialist, in conversation, is always flourishing his ‘red lion,’ and when he seems for a moment to turn to the ‘elephant,’ you find, on examination, that it has still a good deal of the ‘red lion’ about it.

Swift comments upon two faults in conversation, which appear very different, yet spring from the same root, and are equally blameable : the first, an impatience to interrupt others ; and the second, a great uneasiness when we are ourselves interrupted. The chief objects of all conversation, whether conversation proper or small talk, are to entertain and improve our companions, and in our own persons to be improved and entertained ; and if we steadily aim at these objects, we shall certainly escape the two faults indicated by the Dean. If any man speak in company, we may suppose that he does it for the sake of his hearers, and not for his own ; so that common discretion will teach him not to force their attention if they are unwilling to lend it, nor, on the other hand, to interrupt him

\* See ‘She Stoops to Conquer.’

who is in possession, because that is in the grossest manner to indicate his conviction of his own superiority.

'There are some people,' says Swift, 'whose good manners will not suffer them to interrupt you; but, what is almost as bad, they will discover abundance of impatience, and be upon the watch until you have done, because they have started something in their own thoughts which they long to be delivered of. Meantime, they are so far from regarding what passes, that their imaginations are wholly turned upon what they have in reserve, for fear it should slip out of their memory; and thus they confine their invention, which might otherwise range over a hundred things full as good, and that might be much more naturally introduced.'

I think that wit must be introduced into conversation with great reserve. Such a caution seems, however, little called for, considering the limited number of persons to whom it applies; but there is a cheap form of wit which most ill-natured individuals can plagiarise, and in a mixed company its effects are not seldom disagreeable. That is, the repartee, or smart answer, which assuredly does not turn away wrath; the epigrammatic impertinence which young speakers suppose to be wit. 'It now passes for raillery,' says Swift, 'to run a man down in discourse, to put him out of countenance, and make him ridiculous; sometimes to expose the defects of his person or understanding; on all which occasions he is obliged not to be angry, to avoid the imputation of not being able to take a jest. It is admirable to observe one who is dexterous at this art singling out a weak adversary, getting the laugh on his side, and then carrying all before him. The French, whence we borrow the word "raillery," have a quite different idea of the thing, and so had we in the politer ages of our fathers. Raillery was to say something that at first appeared a reproach or reflection, but by some turn of wit, unexpected and surprising, ended always in a compliment, and to the advantage of the person it was addressed to. And, surely, one of the best rules in conversation is, never to say a thing which any of the company can reasonably wish we had rather left unsaid; nor can there anything be well more contrary to the ends for which people meet together, than to part unsatisfied with each other or themselves.'

This fatal kind of smartness, which all may master who have

no regard for the feelings of others, is very much more common now, I imagine, than in Swift's time, when people could hardly be persuaded that wit and rudeness were synonymous. It has found its way into the House of Commons, where it is assiduously practised by men who have little hope by more worthy means of achieving a reputation ; and on the stage, where, in 'drawing-rooms richly upholstered,' the characters pass their time in saying impertinent things to one another. That such flippancy should pass muster as wit cannot, however, be wondered at in a generation which mistakes sensuousness for poetry, æstheticism for art, Wagnerism for music, and charlatans for statesmen !

I have already made a distinction between conversation and small talk ; but after all, the cautions that apply to the one have a distinct reference to the other. I presume that a good conversationalist is also a good small-talker ; though, of course, the reverse does not follow ; a man may shine in small talk, and prove very dull in conversation. It is not my object or desire to depreciate small talk, which, in the present condition of society, is a substitute for conversation, and in any condition would be a necessary complement of it. We cannot always be passing our five-pound notes ; we must sometimes descend to inferior currency, and not only sovereigns, but crowns and two-shilling pieces have their value. Besides, we cannot afford to carry on an exchange by which we always lose. We cannot give our five-pound notes when others stake but shillings and sixpences. Barter is fair and profitable only when we get as much as we give. Our pockets may be full of sovereigns, and yet we shall hesitate to give one for a penny roll ; but to a man who has nothing but counters in his pocket, it does not matter whether the roll cost a penny or a shilling. The moral of this is, that we must put pence into our purse as well as pounds. For want of such a precaution, the meditative scholar is often, in society, at a loss to find topics of conversation ; he has nothing small enough to give, and his companions have nothing with which to conduct an exchange. It is wisdom therefore to pay close attention to this matter of small talk, and endeavour to arrive at a certain command of, and proficiency in, it. Men of the highest gifts cannot dispense with it if they wish to be at no disadvantage in their ordinary intercourse with mankind.

There are many spheres in which, I grant, the small-talker would be out of place. He would make a sorry figure in an assembly of scholars and thinkers, engaged in the discussion of subjects as momentous and as profound as those with which Goethe overwhelmed the hapless Excelmann. His true arena is the dinner-table. It is there he can make the best use of the old, familiar weapons. He does not shun the traditional allusions to the weather or the crops ; and, indeed, it is clear that he *must* begin on some topic which he and his companions have in common. That once found, others will naturally spring out of it ; but in passing to and from them, much dexterity is required. If the small-talker show any doubt of his own powers, or put himself forward too obtrusively, he will come to grief, as we all instinctively rebel against an attempt to drag and haul us into conversation. The string that leads us must be invisible. The exchange of small talk is like a game of battledore, in which an accomplished player will sometimes drop his shuttlecock designedly, partly to flatter and propitiate his partner, and partly for the sake of a prospective advantage. When once he has full command of the game, he will quietly take the lead, and guide it surely but gently into the direction best adapted for the display of his powers. The attractiveness of skilfully managed talk of this kind is felt by everybody ; and we remember with pleasure the evening when, unwittingly, we were taken captive by some man or woman whose intellectual superiority, perhaps, we should not be willing to admit, but who, we readily own, enabled us to pass some very pleasant hours.

But this small talk, which so agreeably flavours conversation, is different indeed from that very small talk in which society nowadays indulges so unblushingly. Go where you will ; not necessarily, as Mr. Hale remarks, into that of the suburban 'Row' or 'Terrace' of semi-detached villas, or that of the small provincial town, or the colonial garrison, but into the homes and among the families of English gentlemen. Mr. Hale does not, I think, exaggerate when he says it is painful to listen to the general conversation ; a name of a 'mutual friend' (Dickens has made the solecism classical) is mentioned, and something which he or she, his or her belongings, have said or done, is commented upon with a freedom which, to be in any way justifiable, presupposes a thorough knowledge of



all sides of the case ; and the minor worries of life, servants, babies, and the like, furnish the theme for a multifarious and protracted discussion. If there be talk which should disgust all refined tastes and ordinarily intelligent minds, it is the farrago of trivialities which makes the daily staple of conversation in some of our English homes. As a proof that I do not exaggerate, let any one refrain for four-and-twenty hours from dealing with such 'small deer,' and observe how great a difficulty he will experience in discovering subjects for conversation. This shows how injurious is the habit. We feed so long upon infant's food, that we can digest nothing more substantial. Treading the same easy round day by day, we lack the strength and the nerve to strike into new channels. Unless we can talk about other people's affairs we must sit silent. 'Tis the only theme we know ; we can discuss no other. Our small talk resembles a hand-organ, which is set to a certain number of regular airs, and grinds through these with edifying regularity. But however the ear may desire a change, it cannot be gratified ; there are no more on the barrel.

I have dwelt at some length upon this subject, because it seems to me of very great importance. The whole tone of society would be raised if we could raise its conversational standard ; if we could lift it from very small talk to small talk, and thence to conversation. This is to be effected by a resolute determination on the part of each to stop his or her supply of very small talk, and to endeavour to contribute some intelligent observation or interesting fact. Women especially may help towards a satisfactory result, for at present women are the great manufacturers of very small talk ; let them rise to the measure of their duties, and pour out the full treasures of their heart and mind ; men will soon follow their example, and we shall live to see the end of the very small talk era.

Would any compiler nowadays think of preparing a volume of Table-Talk ? Where are the talkers ? Where is the talk ? Who could now find materials for such a book as Xenophon's 'Memorabilia' ? The diner-out, I think, should go through a course of reading of ancient and modern books of 'table-talk' in search of spangles to deck the dull frieze of his own conversation. There is Luther's 'Table-Talk,' full of manly wisdom and genial humour, which shows him to us as an easy and ready talker, who did not scruple to throw his heart into



his utterances. Then there are the 'Scaligerana,' with the frank remarks of the scholar upon men and things, tempered by a genial egotism, which makes us feel perfectly at home with their author. The 'Thuana,' bits of the talk of De Thou, and the 'Perroniana,' the table-talk of Cardinal Perron, come next in chronological order. There is better stuff in the 'Ménagiana,' for Ménage was an admirable conversationalist; witty in himself, and the cause of wit in others, from the facility with which his vast stores of information enabled him to lead the conversation into new channels. The contemporaries of Ménage frequently ran him close in wit when they rode their own hobbies. But they lived in an age when conversation was studied as an art, and a man's social success depended upon his skill in it. 'It is a great misfortune,' says La Bruyère, 'not to have wit enough to talk well, nor judgment enough to hold your tongue.' The same writer distinguishes aptly between two kinds of small talkers: 'There are persons who speak a moment before they have thought; there are others with whom you must undergo in conversation all the labour of their minds. They talk correctly, but they talk wearisomely.' Hannay quotes from Ménage another wise remark: 'The art of conversation consists much less in your own abundance than in enabling others to find talk for themselves. Men do not wish to admire you; they want to please.'\*

In our English literature, we have Lord Bacon's 'Aprophthegms' to begin with, though this is scarcely a book of table-talk proper. It records, however, many of the sharp sayings with which the Elizabethan scholars strewed their conversation. Bacon himself was a fine talker, and he had studied the subject, as his 'Short Notes for Civil Conversation' indicate. I digress to quote one or two of these:

'In all kinds of speech, either pleasant, grave, severe, or ordinary, it is convenient to speak leisurely, and rather drawlingly than hastily; because hasty speech confounds the memory, and oftentimes (besides unseemliness) drives a man either to a nonplus or unseemly stammering, harping upon that which should follow; whereas a slow speech confirmeth

\* Rochefoucault has a similar observation: 'The reason why few persons are agreeable in conversation is, because each person thinks more of what he himself intends to say than of what others are saying, and seldom listens but when he desires to speak.'

the memory, addeth a conceit of wisdom to the hearers, besides a seemliness of speech and countenance.'

'Bashfulness is a great hindrance to a man, both of uttering his conceit, and understanding what is propounded unto him; wherefore it is good to press himself forwards with discretion, both in speech and company of the better sort.'

'To desire in discourse to hold all arguments is ridiculous, wanting true judgment; for in all things we never can be exquisite.'

'To use many circumstances, ere you come to matter, is wearisome; and to use none at all, is blunt.'

Drummond of Hawthornden has preserved some of the talk of Ben Jonson; would that somebody had recorded the conversation of Shakespeare! Selden's 'Table-Talk' exhibits to us a conversationalist of forty-talker power; a man who could wrap up a world of wisdom in a jest; who winged his sayings with the feather of wit that they might fly the farther and sink the deeper. From the pages of Boswell we know how Johnson talked. It is fortunate for his fame that Boswell was so industrious and acute; for it is not the lexicographer, the moralist, or the sententious poet, whom the world admires, but the man who could talk with so much force and point, and deliver his opinions with so much weight. It has been well said, however, that his conversation was not suited to general society; there was in it too much of the critic and the dialectician. 'It had not the winning, easy charm of Sir Walter Scott, but was stern and logical. It kept down all sorts of conversational excellence but its own, and gave rise afterwards to many inferior copies.' It was difficult, indeed, to join in conversation with a man who, if you differed from him, clenched his fist and straightway knocked you down—metaphorically, of course.

Walpole wrote and talked well; so did Lord Chesterfield. Following them, we have Lord Byron, of whose more serious conversation Shelley speaks as 'a sort of intoxication.' He lived in an age of great talkers—Curran, Luttrell, De Staël, Sheridan, Mackintosh, Moore. Coleridge was also his contemporary; who did not so much converse as preach. His talk was a long monologue—an uninterrupted flood of eloquence—sometimes mystical, sometimes mysterious, but always brilliant. Sydney Smith

was a happy talker ; abounding in humour as well as good humour, always shrewd and sagacious, quick to see the grotesque aspect of things, of a fertile fancy, and with a wide and profound sympathy with all that was true, just, and honourable. His conversation rippled with good things. They came spontaneously, and one happy image suggested another, in apparently interminable succession. His lambent humour played round a subject so as to light up every side of it, discovering a host of analogies and contrasts imperceptible to duller minds. Sydney Smith was the only wit who never lost his temper or said an ill-natured thing ; and this, perhaps, was the great charm of his conversation. His hearers were never afraid of him ; whereas, with some wits the listeners, while they laugh, feel uneasy, lest under the jest should lie some mordant sarcasm, or lest the satire just aimed at another, should on the next occasion be directed against themselves.

In certain 'Hints upon Etiquette,' by *Αγώγος*, published nearly half a century ago, but characterised by a good sense which must always render them valuable, I find a wise caution in reference to 'Talking Shop,' which I may add to my own emphatic warning against this particularly disagreeable custom. 'There are few things,' he says, 'that display worse taste than the introduction of professional topics in general conversation, especially if there be ladies present ; the minds of those men must be miserably ill-stored who cannot find other subjects for conversation than their own professions. Who has not felt this on having been compelled to listen to "clerical slang," musty college-jokes, and anecdotes divested of all interest beyond the atmosphere of an university ; or "law jokes," with "good stories" of "learned counsel," "long yarns," or the equally tiresome muster-roll of "our regiment"—colonels *dead*, maimed majors retired on pensions, subs lost or "exchanged," gravitating between Boulogne and the "Bankruptcy Court?" All such exclusive topics are signs either of a limited intellect, or the most lamentable ignorance.' They are signs, too, of excessively bad breeding ; for the introduction of a topic on which no one can discourse but the speaker, necessarily chokes out the life of a conversation ; and for the lively talk of the many substitutes a dreary monologue. They imply an almost supernatural egotism ; as if the speaker believed that all the world must perforce be interested in whatever concerns *him*. Need-

less to say that these remarks do not apply to the case of an acknowledged 'expert,' whose opinion has been invited on the questions which of right fall within his special province. Every ear is on the alert when Ruskin discusses art, or Matthew Arnold poetry, or Professor Tyndall science. But the Ruskins, the Matthew Arnolds, the Tyndalls, are few; and in their places we are talked down by briefless lawyers who repeat old legal saws, or amateur yachtsmen proud of their experiences in the Solent and the Clyde, or subalterns who retail the 'awfully clever things, you know,' of the wit of the mess-tables. Now, as a rule, society cares nothing for the individual; and there can be no greater error than for a man to put forward in conversation his individual tastes, opinions, views, unless he has attained to a position which entitles him to speak as one having authority. And even then what he says should be general in tone and application, with as little allusion as possible to himself. Nor should he suffer his remarks to assume the form and proportions of an oration, lest his hearers in spite of themselves betray their weariness. A St. Paul may preach, and yet Eutychus fall asleep! In spite of his reputation as the Aristarchus of his day, Samuel Johnson could irritate his hearers into administering a rebuke to his verbosity.

The colloquial inferiority of the present generation is attributed by Mr. Hannay purely to the action of the press. Newspapers, novels, magazines, reviews, he says, gather up the intellectual elements of our life, like so many electric machines, drawing electricity from the atmosphere into themselves. Everything, he adds, is recorded and discussed in print, and subjects have lost their freshness long before friends have assembled for the evening. And he concludes: \* 'Where there *is* talk of a superior character, it appears to affect the epigrammatic form; and this is an unhealthy sign. If there were no other objection, how rarely can it avoid that appearance of self-consciousness and effort which is fatal to all elegance and ease! The epigrammatic is a valuable element, but should never predominate; since good conversation flows from a happy union of all the powers. To approximate to this, a certain amount of painstaking is necessary; and though artifice is detestable, we must submit that talk may be as legitimately made a subject

\* Hannay, 'Essays from the Quarterly,' pp. 32, 33.

of care and thought as any other part of a man's humanity, and that it is ridiculous to send your mind abroad in a state of slovenliness while you bestow on your body the most refined care.'

Holding this opinion very strongly, I have dealt with the subject of conversation at considerable length—let me hope, to the interest and advantage of the reader.







## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ETIQUETTE OF WEDDINGS.

‘Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities, and churches, and heaven itself.’—BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

Introductory Remarks—Marriages of Convenience—Tennyson’s ‘Locksley Hall’—Marriages of Affection—A Happy Pair—Advice to Young Men about to Marry (*not Punch’s*)—A Warning against ‘Love’ Marriages—And against Marrying without Love—Brathwait on ‘Matching with your Equal’—Advice to Women on the Choice of a Husband—Sir Richard Steele on Married Life—‘Proposing’—Hints to Bashful Young Men—Examples from the Novelists of Different Ways of Proposing—From ‘Lothair’—From ‘Middlemarch’—From ‘Ernest Maltravers’—From ‘Henrietta Temple’—Quotation from Sir Philip Sidney—Engaged—Behaviour of a Betrothed Couple—The Etiquette of Delicacy—The Wedding-day—Bride and Bridesmaids—Etiquette of Weddings—The Procession in the Church—Spenser’s ‘Epithalamium’—After the Service—The Wedding Breakfast—Departure of the Newly-Married—Sir John Suckling’s Ballad of a Wedding—Desirability of a Reform—Old Traditions and Customs still Observed—The Honeymoon—The Bride’s Presents—The Wedding Dress—Description of Dresses actually Worn by Brides and Bridesmaids.



AM not about to set before the reader a history of Marriage or Marriage Ceremonies, though the subject is one of considerable interest in connection with the progress of civilisation. Nor do I intend to give especial prominence to its moral and social aspects, though their importance might easily be illustrated. My business is with the Etiquette of Marriage—a point less interesting and less important, yet not without its value; for the customs which have become conventionally established in England in connection with it tend to ensure the preservation of order and decorum. The law looks upon marriage as purely

a civil contract, and in the early ages of society it was emphatically a contract of sale ; the daughter was reckoned among the goods and chattels of her father, and disposed of at a fixed price. Usually the bargain was made between the heads of families only, and the future bride and bridegroom were absolutely ignored. I should not like to say that this practice is wholly obsolete, is wholly unknown even in the present day ; and the sale of a daughter for rank or money is the groundwork of a very considerable number of plays, poems, and novels. It supplies the 'motive' of Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall' and 'Maud,' and provokes his strongest, bitterest satire :

'Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?'

I am willing to believe, however, that the marriage of those who consult these pages will be the legal and religious confirmation of a pure and steadfast affection ; that it will be profaned by no sordid considerations. I am willing to believe that they will enter upon it in no light or careless spirit, but with a deep sense of the duties it brings with it, the responsibilities it entails. The choice of wife or husband is really the most serious thing that man or woman has to decide upon ; it affects their future usefulness, their future happiness, their social as well as domestic relations. So intimate is the marriage union, that neither party can escape from its influences ; it elevates or it lowers, it inspires or it enfeebles, it makes or it mars. As the wife is, so is the husband ; as the husband, so the wife ; the two may raise each other to a higher standard of thought and feeling, or drag one another down to a lower level than either occupied at first. It is in this wise that Sir Philip Sidney describes 'a happy couple,' 'he joying in her, she joying in herself, but in herself because she enjoyed him ; both increasing their riches by giving to each other, and making one life double, because they made a double life one ; where desire never wanted satisfaction, nor satisfaction ever bred satiety, he ruling because she would obey, or rather, because she would obey, she therein ruling.'

A young man, before he contemplates marriage, should consider what a wife ought to be, what he would wish her to be.

He must not be influenced by mere personal attractions, though I grant that these are not without their weight, and certainly not by mercenary reasons. I do not mean to say that a maiden who is all that can be desired in point of good sense, modesty, culture, sweetness of temper, and tenderness, is the worse for the possession of 'money and lands;' to make such an assertion would be absurd. But 'money and lands' are not to be weighed in the balance against the real endowments of mind and heart. Milton tells us that a good wife is 'Heaven's last, best gift to man;' but what constitutes a good wife? I think we may answer—purity of thought and feeling, a generous temper, a disposition ready to forgive, patience, a high sense of duty, a cultivated mind, and a natural grace of manner. I think she should be able to govern her household with gentle resolution, and to take an intelligent interest in her husband's pursuits. She should have a clear understanding, should be cheerful without levity, and tender without humility. She should have 'all the firmness that does not exclude delicacy,' and 'all the softness that does not imply weakness.' The great Elizabethan statesman, Lord Burleigh, writing to his son, said: 'When it shall please God to bring thee to man's estate, use great providence and circumspection in choosing thy wife, for from thence will spring all thy future good or evil. And it is an action of life like unto a stratagem of war, wherein a man can die but once. If thy estate be good, match near home and at leisure; if weak, far-off, and quickly. Inquire diligently of her disposition, and how her parents have been inclined in their youth. Let her not be poor, how generous (*generosa*, of good birth) soever, for a man can buy nothing in the market with gentility. Nor choose a base and unseemly creature altogether for wealth; for it will cause contempt in others and loathing in thee. Neither make choice of a dwarf or a fool; for by the one thou shalt beget a race of pigmies; the other will be thy universal disgrace, and it will irk thee to hear her talk. Thou shalt find, to thy great grief, that there is nothing more fulsome than a she-fool.' There is a touch of worldliness in this advice, but it is based on a wide knowledge and experience of the world.

I would counsel young men, as a general rule, not to marry below them. It is perhaps just as well that they should not marry above them. Equality of condition implies sympathy of

taste. Our social distinctions are still so strongly marked that each class has its own traditions, associations, habits, views ; and if the wife belong to a class higher or lower than that of her husband, it will be difficult for them to enter into that close and absolute communion of mind and heart which is essential to the happiness of wedded life, without which there will be no 'compatibility of temper.' There are abundant instances of the ill-success of marriages in which this fundamental principle has been disregarded. When 'cloth of frieze' is pieced with 'cloth of gold,' the most careless eye can detect the contrast. A man who marries his cook will sink to the level of the kitchen ; a woman who marries her groom will live in the atmosphere of the stable.\*

At all events, do not marry without love. A marriage of convenience is detestable ; but it is hardly worse than a marriage of reason—a coolly calculated affair, from which the light and life of true affection are wholly wanting. In the course of years there will come trials and anxieties, which only a real and unselfish love will enable you to bear without mental or moral injury ; there will come a strain and stress of the relations between wife and husband which only love will be able to withstand. That absolute conquest of self, that implicit confidence, that complete and generous sacrifice of individual wishes and hopes, that sweet and unconquerable patience,

\* Brathwait quaintly, but sensibly, says : 'Follow the Sage's advice in your choice : *Match with your equall*, if not in fortunes, for so both may prove beggars, at least in descent : so will she the better content herself with your estate, and conform her the better to your meanes. For I have seldome seene any difference greater, arising from marriage, than imparity of birth or descent, when the wife will not strive to twit her husband with her parentage, and brave him with repetition of her descent. Likewise, as I would not have you to entertaine so maine a businesse without mature advice, so I would not have you wholly rely upon a friend's counsell : but as you are to have the greatest oare in the boat, so to make yourselfe your owne carver ; for hee that is enforced to his choice makes a dangerous bargaine. Wherefore ground your choice on Love, so shall you not chuse but like ; making this your conclusion :

"To her in Hymen's bonds I'll nere be tied,  
Whom Love hath not espous'd and made my bride."

For what miseries have ensued on *enforced Marriages*, there is no Age but may record : where rites enforced made the hands no sooner joyned than their minds divorced, bidding adieu to Content, even at that instant when those unhappy rites were solemnised.'—R. BRATHWAIT, 'The English Gentleman' (edit. 1641), p. 145.



which are the glory of wedlock, cannot exist without love. Some persons, especially women, marry in the belief or hope that love will follow marriage : a dangerous delusion. The very conditions under which such a marriage takes place forbid the after-growth of love, which is a plant that cannot flourish in an uncongenial soil.

As to the choice of a husband, I think it is enough to recommend a woman to seek out a Christian gentleman. He must be a man whom she can look up to and respect, or her affection will have no solid holdfast to secure it. Hence he must be a man of probity, of honour, of generous temper, of moral courage, of great constancy of purpose. He must be a man who does not decide hastily, but having decided is firm in his resolve. He must be a man of large and liberal views and elevation of thought, in whose companionship his wife's mind will be constantly broadening and refining. He must be a man of fine manners, who does not throw off his courtesy like a cloak when he crosses the threshold of his home. He must be a man of wide and sound education, so that his intellect may not be narrowed to little issues. He must be a man who in all companies and all situations shall so bear himself as never to provoke in his wife a feeling of shame or dissatisfaction. He must be truthful, so that her confidence in him may be immovable ; liberal, so that she may never have cause to blush at his meanness ; but prudent, that she may have no occasion to weep for his extravagance. He must be temperate, or else he will never be master of himself ; and devout, for he who does not fear God lives without the control of conscience upon his actions. To the poor he must be kindly courteous ; to his superiors deferential without servility ; to his equals amiable, patient, even-tempered.

Mayhap, the reader will say, with the writer in the *Spectator* : ' It requires more virtues to make a good husband or wife, than what go to the finishing any the most shining character whatsoever.'<sup>\*</sup>

\* ' The marriage-life,' says Sir Richard Steele, ' is always an insipid, a vexatious, or a happy condition. The first is, when two people of no genius or taste for themselves meet together, upon such a settlement as has been thought reasonable by parents and conveyancers, from an exact valuation of the land and cash of both parties. In this case the young lady's person is no more regarded than the house and improvements in purchase of an estate ; but she goes with her fortune rather than her fortune with her. These



In England, as everybody knows, matrimonial advances proceed, or are supposed to proceed, from the gentleman alone. When he has determined on the lady whom he wishes to make his wife, he 'proposes' to her by letter or verbally. It is, of course, understood that he has some previous acquaintance with her—that he loves her, or thinks he loves her, or is animated by some sufficient and not unworthy motive. Usually, a proposal is not ventured until there is reasonable hope that it will not be refused. It is better to make it *vivâ voce*, because a letter will always have an air of restraint about it, and, moreover, few are able to express themselves fitly in a letter; they say too much or too little; they are exaggerated and artificial; or cold and reserved. I think, too, that it is due to the lady that she should be addressed personally; it is a deference which she is entitled to expect.

It is of considerable importance in the earlier days of attentions which are supposed to originate with the gentleman, that a young lady should guard against hasty attachments—against surrendering her affections before they have been asked and even before they are desired. It is not every little civility or polite attention which is to be taken as if it were the expression of a personal and permanent devotion.

A proud and defensive prudence will in like manner dictate to the gentleman not to hazard a declaration unless he has reasonable grounds for believing it will be agreeable. If, however, from some fault or miscalculation on the part of one or the other, a lady finds herself compelled to reject the proposals which her own conduct may, to a certain extent, and even in-

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make up the crowd, or vulgar of the rich, and fill up the lumber of the human race, without beneficence towards those below them, or respect to those above them.

'The vexatious life arises from a conjunction of two people of quick taste and resentment, put together for reasons well known to their friends, in which especial care is taken to avoid (what they think the chief of evils) poverty, and insure to them riches, with every evil besides. These good people live in a constant constraint before company, and too great familiarity alone. When they are within observation, they fret at each other's carriage and behaviour; when alone, they revile each other's person and conduct. In company, they are in purgatory; when only together, in a hell.

'The *happy* marriage is, where two persons meet and voluntarily make choice of each other, without principally regarding or neglecting the circumstances of fortune or beauty. These may still love in spite of adversity or sickness: the former we may, in some measure, defend ourselves from; the other is the portion of our very make.'

advertently, have provoked or precipitated, she will do so with the utmost delicacy and the greatest consideration and sympathy that are compatible with persisting in her announced determination of refusal. The cause of rejection is the lady's own secret, which she may impart or withhold at her discretion. It may, in certain circumstances, be convenient to declare it, as it may either tend to a clearer perception on the part of her suitor of the finality of her decision, or may indicate to the ingenuity of masculine affection a method of removing a difficulty which in her heart she will be glad to have it proved to her judgment and reason not to be insuperable. Whatever the lady may do with her own secret, she is bound to regard a rejected offer as the secret of the gentlemen; not to be divulged unless to her parents, who have a right to know promptly the more salient points in the history of her affections.

As to the *vivâ voce* method of proposal, it is possible that I shall be told by bashful lovers that they know not what to say. Nonsense! when a man is in earnest, earnestness will give him eloquence. And even if there be not the eloquence of speech, there will be the more touching eloquence of broken words or half-formed sentences, which to the ear of a loving maiden will sound like sweetest music. I cannot undertake to prescribe any definite form of words; each man should say what his feelings at the time suggest. If we turn to the pages of our novelists we shall find, however, a variety of 'proposals,' from which the hesitating and nervous suitor may possibly derive some useful hints; though I do not recommend him to plagiarise too long from any one of these, lest the lady should be familiar with the original, and detect the piracy! Lothair, it may be remembered, made his offer to the Lady Corisande, under arches of golden yew, in a somewhat copybook-like set of phrases: 'I have committed many mistakes, doubtless many follies, have formed many opinions, and have changed many opinions; but to one I have been constant, in one I am unchanged, and that is my adoring love for you.' The Lady Corisande, on hearing this avowal, 'turned pale, she stopped, then gently taking his arm, she hid her face in his breast.' Lothair, on his part, 'soothed and sustained her agitated frame, and sealed with an embrace her speechless form.' I don't profess to understand what a 'speechless form' is, or how it is

‘sealed with an embrace;’ but to the embrace itself, on such an occasion, I offer no objection.

In ‘*Middlemarch*,’ *Ladislaw* and *Dorothea* avow their mutual love during a thunderstorm :—

‘There came a vivid flash of lightning which lit each of them up for the other. *Dorothea* darted instantaneously from the window; *Will* followed her, seizing her hand with a spasmodic movement; and so they stood, with their hands clasped, like two children, looking out on the storm, while the thunder gave a tremendous crack and roll above them, and the rain began to pour down. Then they turned their faces towards each other, with the memory of his last words in them, and they did not loose each other’s hands.

“‘There is no hope for me,” said *Will*. “Even if you loved me as well as I love you—even if I were everything to you—I shall most likely always be very poor; on a sober calculation, one can count on nothing but a creeping lot. It is impossible for us ever to belong to each other. It is perhaps base of me to have asked for a word from you. I meant to go away into silence, but I have not been able to do what I meant.”

““Don’t be sorry,” said *Dorothea*, in her clear tender tones. “I would rather share all the trouble of our parting.”

‘Her lips trembled, and so did his. It was never known which lips were the first to move towards the other’s lips; but they kissed tremblingly, and then they moved apart.’

Eventually the two lovers understood each other, and the usual embrace follows :—‘In an instant *Will* was close to her, and his arms round her.’ But I wish for my readers a less passionate confession—less storm of feeling and emotion, as well as less of thunder and lightning.

Let us turn to *Bulwer Lytton*, an acknowledged authority in the gentle science of love, and see what we can learn from him on this delicate subject. In ‘*Ernest Maltravers*’ we find the following scene between the hero and *Lady Florence Lascelles* :—

‘*Florence* grew deadly pale, and covering her face with her hands, burst into tears.

““Oh, fool that I was!” cried *Ernest* in the passion of the moment, “not to know—not to have felt that there were not two *Florences* in the world! But if the thought had crossed me, I would not have dared to harbour it.”

"Go, go," sobbed Florence; "leave me, in mercy leave me!"

"Not till you bid me rise," said Ernest, in emotion scarcely less deep than hers, as he sank on his knee at her feet.'

Need I go on? When they left that spot, a soft confession had been made—deep vows interchanged, and Ernest Maltravers was the accepted suitor of Florence Lascelles.

Lady Florence Lascelles dies, however, without becoming the wife of Maltravers; and that truly Bulwerian hero is left to fall in love, at a later period, with Evelyn Cameron. His declaration, in this case, is made with effusive sentiment. After a long and egotistical account of his life and feelings, he exclaims:

"Evelyn, I have confided to you all—all this wild heart now and evermore you own. My destiny is with you."

Evelyn was silent—he took her hand—and her tears fell warm and fast upon it. Alarmed and anxious—as a lover well may be, when his *chère amie* goes off into a fit of weeping—he drew her towards him and gazed upon her face.'

"You fear to wound me," he said, with pale lips and trembling voice. "Speak on—I can bear all."

"No, no," said Evelyn, falteringly; "I have no fear, but not to deserve you."

"You love me, then—you love me!" cried Maltravers wildly, and clasping her to his heart.'

The moon rose at that instant, and the wintry sward and the dark trees were bathed in the sudden light. The time—the light—so exquisite to all—even in tenderness and in sorrow—how divine in such companionship! in such overflowing and ineffable sense of bliss. There and then for the first time did Maltravers press upon that modest and blushing cheek the kiss of Love, of Hope—the seal of a union he fondly hoped the grave itself would not dissolve!

'Henrietta Temple' has always seemed to me, as a love-story, one of the most successful things in our literature. I know of no book which I can more cordially recommend to a young man in love; he will find in it a skilful exposition of the entire gamut of the passion. Readers unacquainted with it are invited to meditate upon the following passage, in which the hero, Ferdinand Armine, 'proposes' to the beautiful Henrietta. I should premise that the scene is a terraced gar-



den ; the time, evening, when the thin white moon begins to gleam, and Hesperus glitters in the fading sky.

‘Ferdinand Armine’—we are told—‘turned from the beautiful world around him to gaze upon a countenance sweeter than the summer air, softer than the gleaming moon, brighter than the evening star. The shadowy light of purple fell upon the still and solemn presence of Henrietta Temple. Irresistible motion impelled him ; softly he took her gentle hand ; and bending his head, he murmured to her, ‘Most beautiful, I love thee.’

This strikes us as a bold and promising beginning!

Ferdinand follows it up with a semi-lyrical outburst—the language of love ought always to be lyrical !—for which I have no space. Coming at length to a conclusion, he says :

‘Tell me, is it my fault that you are beautiful? Oh ! how beautiful, my wretched and exhausted soul too surely feels ! Is it my fault those eyes are like the dawn, that thy sweet voice thrills through my frame, and that the slightest touch of that light hand falls like a spell on my entranced form ! Ah ! Henrietta, be merciful, be kind !’

He paused for a second, and yet she did not answer ; but her cheek fell upon his shoulder, and the gentle pressure of her hand was more eloquent than language. That slight, sweet signal was to him as the sunrise on the misty earth. Full of hope, and joy, and confidence, he took her in his arms, sealed her cold lips with a burning kiss, and vowed to her his *eternal and almighty love* (!).

He bore her to an old stone bench placed on the terrace. Still she was silent ; but her hand clasped his, and her head rested on his bosom. The gleaming moon now glittered, the hills and woods were silvered by its beam, and the far meads were bathed with its clear, fair light. Not a single cloud curtailed the splendour of the stars. What a rapturous soul was Ferdinand Armine’s as he sat that night on the old bench, on Ducie Terrace, shrouding from the rising breeze the trembling form of Henrietta Temple ! And yet it was not cold that made her shiver.

The clock of Venice struck ten. She moved, saying, in a faint voice, ‘We must go home, my Ferdinand !’

From these specimens both the cavalier and the lady may



possibly gain a hint or two—the former as to the manner of his proposal, the latter as to the mode of its acceptance. If not satisfied, they can pursue the inquiry for themselves in the veracious chronicles of Mr. Anthony Trollope or Mrs. Oliphant, William Black or Holme Lee. I do not recommend the sensational novelists, as their heroes and heroines are swayed by wonderful gusts of passion which ordinary people are not likely to experience—or they may wait until the opportunity comes, and trust to Nature. We will suppose the offer made and accepted, the vow spoken, the troth plighted, the uncertainty changed into golden certainty, so that the ‘happy pair’ may exclaim in the quaintly beautiful words of Sir Philip Sidney :

‘ My true love hath my heart, and I have his,  
By just exchange one to the other given ;  
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss ;  
There never was a better bargain driven :  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.  
‘ His heart in me keeps him and me in one ;  
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides :  
He loves my heart, for once it was his own ;  
I cherish his because in me it bides :  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.’

The gentleman hastens to obtain—unless he has already done so—the sanction of his lady-love’s father, and thenceforth he is treated as ‘one of the family.’ No restrictions are placed upon the intimacy of the engaged couple, who walk together, dance together, and are freely introduced to the relatives on either side. Custom, however, requires that the gentleman’s family should call first, and that he should make the first present, which, by the way, generally takes the shape of a betrothal ring. This engagement ring will vary with the fortunes and position of the parties, from a diamond to a ring of chased gold, which can afterwards be worn as a keeper. It is sometimes set with different gems, the initial letters of which form the Christian name of the gentleman—one interesting instance of which was the engagement ring of the Princess of Wales, comprising a Beryl, an Emerald, a Ruby, a Topaz, a Jacinth, and an Emerald, the initial letters of which, taken in this order, made up the name ‘Bertie,’ by which the Prince of Wales was called in his childhood. The duration of the engagement depends, of course, upon circumstances ; it should

not be too long, or too short—long enough to enable the young couple to obtain a fuller knowledge of their respective tastes, habits, and idiosyncrasies, and a fuller conviction that marriage will be to the happiness of each. During this stage of probation the gentleman will be on his trial, and his real character will show itself in his intercourse with his betrothed's family, and in the arrangements which he makes for her future convenience and comfort. As a rule, it is the only satisfactory opportunity which our social condition enables a young maiden to avail herself of for acquiring some degree of familiarity with the man to whom she has promised to devote her heart, her mind, her life.

During this transition state neither he nor she should indulge in even the shadow of a flirtation. To do so is a breach of manners and of morality, and indicates a dangerous thoughtlessness and levity which promise ill for the future happiness of both parties. On the other hand, they should remember that love has its reserves, its sweet, tender privacies, and avoid displaying in public an ostentatious affection. They will not pretend to be strangers, or assume an air of careless indifference; but they will not vulgarise their position by a show of passionate and all-absorbing devotion, which never fails to provoke ridicule. Their friends and relatives, nevertheless, will do well to contrive for them occasions of private conversation, and to recollect that love has much to say which is not intended for stranger ears. The conversation of lovers is like a hieroglyphic, meaningless to those who have not the clue to it. Only, in contriving these delightful opportunities, you must avoid too open and pronounced a management, and not give everybody to understand that Florizel and Perdita wish to be alone. Florizel and Perdita, on their own part, must exercise a constant reticence. Florizel must not seek to gratify a silly vanity by exhibiting his influence over Perdita; nor Perdita dazzle the eyes of the disengaged maidens of her circle by making Florizel come at her call.

Both Florizel and Perdita, however, must have their accesses of reason; their rational intervals, in which settlements must be discussed, and pecuniary prospects examined. Men and women may be deeply in love, but they cannot live on kisses and honey. So, after the wedding-day has been fixed, which is the exclusive privilege of the lady, she has to choose and

prepare her trousseau, the cost of which will vary according to the means and generosity of the parents. She has also to fix the number of and select her bridesmaids ; they may be four, five, six, eight, according to choice ; or any number, indeed, from two to twelve, according to the number of sisters or intimate friends with which the bride and bridegroom are blessed. Generally speaking they should be dressed all alike ; or, if they be tolerably numerous, they may be equally divided in the matter of costume, one half having, according to complexion and other considerations, a uniform toilette different from that adopted by the other.

In addition, however, to the naming of the day and the preparation of the trousseau—to one or both of which subjects I may have occasion shortly to recur—there is a prosaic antenuptial proceeding which, considering that marriage is indissoluble except under conditions of great shame and misery, or both, and can never be invalidated by any antecedent deception as to position, property, or expectations, it is of immense importance to have satisfactorily concluded. I allude to the question of settlements, without which the property of no woman is safe for a moment against the commercial and other vicissitudes of fortune which may overtake her husband, or against the caprices and habits of selfishness which may be developed in his character. Some ladies may be too blind, or too credulous, to foresee or believe in these contingencies ; and the duty of looking after the interests of the intended bride and her probable offspring will devolve upon her friends, preferably as represented by the legal adviser of the family. This gentleman will not only secure a fair control of the fortune or the lady, but will also insist that the bridegroom-elect, if unpossessed of property, shall guard against the disastrous consequences of his sudden or untimely death, by effecting a policy of life-assurance for the benefit of his wife, or rather widow, and her children.

Thoughtful and observant ladies, who understand on what apparently trivial matters domestic happiness may depend, have insisted that 'it is not in the formation of a reserve only that the principle of a separate and independent fund, of which the wife should be the custodian or the possessor, should find expression. The institution known as pin-money, from whatever source it might be provided, should prevail amongst all classes

of society without distinction. A weekly or other periodical allowance should be made, according to the intervals of income, on which the wife should be able confidently to count, and to draw for her household and personal expenses. Such an arrangement would appeal at once to her instincts of self-respect, honour, and economy ; would spare the temper of the husband from the chafe of constantly irritating applications ; would prudently anticipate his improvidence ; and would almost infallibly conduce all round to the family prosperity.

‘This arrangement cannot, of course, be legally insisted upon, but it should be morally. A man should not marry unless he has the means to keep his wife in tolerable comfort, and no really considerate and thoughtful husband would so far subjugate a woman’s natural independence as to put her to the uncomfot of asking for money to supply her proper needs ; therefore, however small the means are, we repeat there should be a sum decided upon handed to her at stated intervals for her own use.’

The great ceremony which forms so marked an epoch in every life comes at last. It must take place either after the due publication of banns, or on view of a license from the bishop of the diocese, unless it be a ‘civil marriage ;’ that is, a simple, not to say undignified, procedure before the local registrar of marriages. This method has not yet succeeded in attracting the suffrages of good society ; but in view of its possible adoption it is well to state that it is perfectly legal, fulfilling, as it does, the essential condition that the parties desirous of contracting marriage exchange a virtually public declaration that they take each other for man and wife. The marriage so celebrated takes place before at least two witnesses in the office of the superintendent-registrar of the district, an official, it is proper to remark, whose duty it is to attend as one of the witnesses at any marriage which is solemnised with a religious ceremony in any building—whether belonging to the Roman Catholic communion, or to any denomination of Protestant Dissenters—which does not belong to the Established Church. The validity of a marriage is not affected by the form of service, whether liturgical or otherwise, with which it is celebrated ; nor, indeed, by the accident that the several baptismal names of the parties interested, or of one of them, have not been set forth with an exhaustive correctness, be it



in the license, or in the publication of banns, as comprising altogether their legal name and designation. Seeing, however, that any omission of a distinctive name tends to weaken the proof of identity, it is for that, as well as for other reasons, advisable to depart as little as possible from the strictest order of regularity. This accuracy should be the care of the bridegroom-elect; and must be ensured before he is in a position to devolve any duty at all upon a 'best man,' whom only the immediate prospect of the wedding can call into existence.

The necessity of observing the canonical hours, from eight a.m. to twelve o'clock at noon, attaches to all marriages, wherever, and with what rites or absence of rites soever, they may be celebrated; and it is equally imperative that the parties, or one of them, should have fulfilled the condition of a previous residence. Yet even these requirements are not absolute; for by a special license, which costs about thirty pounds, and can be obtained only by application to the Archbishop of the Province, authority is given for the performance of the marriage ceremony at any time and at any 'meet and proper place.' Marriage before the registrar demands an antecedent residence of seven clear days in his district; and in cases where the candidates for matrimony live in different districts notice must be given in each district, after which twenty-one clear days must elapse before the marriage can take place. The method is economical; the aggregate of the fees amounting to something less than half a sovereign. Thus one shilling, which is, strictly speaking, the fee of the registrar, must be paid on giving notice; and at the expiration of twenty-one days another shilling must be disbursed for the registrar's certificate. This notice must be given whether the marriage is performed at the register office, or at any Nonconformist place of worship in the district; for his attendance at which, the registrar charges a fee of five shillings, and a further sum of two shillings and sevenpence for a copy of the marriage certificate.

It has been truly observed, by a recent writer on the subject, that, 'concurrently with the Church revival of recent years, the practice of being married after banns has been restored to fashion, as being, ecclesiastically speaking, more dutiful, because more regular, not calling for so much as that small exercise of the dispensing power of the bishop which even an ordinary license involves. Banns is a Saxon word, and signifies a pro-



clamation; its radical idea is that of giving publicity to the intended event. The publication takes place on three successive Sundays, during the time of morning service, or the earliest service held thereafter when there are no morning prayers.'

Notwithstanding this reaction, the proposition may be assumed still to hold good, that the majority of the marriages of society take place in the church, and by ordinary license; the following particulars of which, as set forth in a notice issued at the Bishop of London's Registry in Doctor's Commons, can hardly fail in some quarters to be of practical interest. The notice is as follows:

#### 'MARRIAGE LICENSES.

'Applications for Marriage Licenses must be made in the Registry by one of the parties to be married; and no other application, either verbal or in writing, can be received as instructions for a Marriage License.

'No Agent will be allowed to interfere in any manner whatsoever in obtaining or procuring a Marriage License, or paying for the same.

'Affidavits for Marriage Licenses are prepared from the instructions or one of the parties to be married *personally* appearing in the Registry, and the License is to be delivered to the party, upon payment of the sum of thirty shillings over and above the amount paid for stamps.

	£	s.	d.
' Fees and charges for the Affidavit and License ...	1	10	0
Stamps ... ..	0	12	6
	<hr/>		
	£2	2	6
	<hr/>		

'BY ORDER OF THE BISHOP.

'Office Hours, 10 to 4; Saturdays, 10 to 3.

'NOTE.—By the 4th George IV. cap. 76, it is enacted, that in order to avoid fraud and collusion in obtaining Licenses for Marriage, that before any such License be granted, one of the parties shall make an affidavit, *on oath*, that there is no legal impediment to the intended marriage; and also that one of such parties has had his or her usual place of abode for the space of fifteen days, immediately preceding the issue of the License, within the boundary or district assigned to the parish church or the district parish, in the church of which the Marriage is to be solemnised.'

Whilst giving an account of what are, relatively speaking, the domestic regulations which govern marriage, it is proper—if, indeed, recent events did not make it imperative—to urge the necessity for the speedy adoption of an international law of marriage. Until this takes place, we would urge every young English lady who may be tempted to listen to the proposals of a Frenchman or other foreigner while resident in

England, to ascertain, very carefully and even technically, that her position will be secure in the country of her husband's nativity. Much misery has been, and is still being wrought, by the practical cruelty of foreign laws which have deposed virtuous and honourable women from the only *status* which as mothers they could tolerate.

As it is the privilege of the lady to fix the day on which to surrender so much of her prerogative to the will of another, it may be well to remind her of the survival, from times of greater social or canonical limitations, of the prejudice still entertained against the month of May, and the objections against the season of Lent, as periods for the celebration of matrimony.

The preparation of the trousseau, or outfit, is a gradual and may be almost a leisurely process. The trousseau is generally understood as comprising all articles of dress which are suitable for the social position of the bride; and it is, *inter alia*, the capacity of the paternal purse which will dictate the quantity and quality of under-clothing and other necessary articles to be provided. Dresses, bonnets, and the like, are so amenable to the changes and freaks of fashion that it would be unwise to invest in too large a collection; and on the whole the number of the various articles included in the trousseau should be regulated by their tendency to succumb to fashion, or to hold their own against it. There is room for the exercise of discrimination between the 'too little and too much,' between an unworthy parsimony and such an expenditure as would be inordinate, because it might be useless.

From the trousseau—of which, it may be said, jewels form no part, unless in cases where the lady has a claim to her share in the jewels of her own family—it is natural to turn to the consideration of the presents which the bride-elect will receive as tangible expressions of the affection and sympathy of her friends. Such presents should be sent to her father's house a few days before that fixed upon for the marriage ceremony; and in those which it is the privilege of the bridegroom to provide, including jewels, I may say, in words adapted from an expert and thoughtful pen, that 'not less than in the purchases made by friends, a nice proportion of outlay to means, fortune, and position should be diligently studied. It is a matter of importance that the entire group of presents should

possess in the highest attainable degree the attributes of symmetry and completeness. There should be no startling or incongruous splendour in one present which would mock the appointments of the bride in the mass, or which would compel or even tempt her to injudicious outlay in order to provide expensive articles *en suite*. The proverbial gift of a white elephant, suggestive of the necessity of imperial furniture and appointments, is understood as a synonym for disastrous extravagance. The locality and climate of the country in which the period of the life of the newly-married couple, immediately succeeding the wedding, is to be passed, is also a matter deserving consideration on the part of open-handed friends who would also be discriminating.

‘Further, in this matter of presents, true kindness will seek to ally itself with ingenuity, and will endeavour in every possible way to attain to the greatest serviceableness in the aggregate of presents. The gifts of careless or unimaginative people have a tendency to run into special forms, and to comply only with the negative condition of not being improper; but the undue repetition of these ready forms of presents tends to a surfeit or plethora of ornament in absurd or grotesque combinations with a *minimum* of usefulness. It would be misfortune if the tributes of the friends of a lady on the threshold of house-keeping ran in the direction of fish-knives to the exclusion of biscuit-drums; or if the bride, like Tarpeia, crushed by the monotonous incidence of martial bracelets, should be overwhelmed with toilet necessities when her paraphernalia was left entirely without a cruet-stand or a card-tray.

‘Friends of the bride will endeavour, by more or less direct or indirect inquiry, to ascertain upon what particular articles there is likely to be a “run,” and will be very careful to go outside of these for the selection. Those friends of the bride, again, who are also friends of each other, and are within consulting distance, may reasonably be expected to confer together for mutual advice, so as to arrive at a mutual conclusion as to the form their gifts should severally assume.

‘From the closer friendship will be expected, as is natural, the exercise of the greater thought and trouble in the attempt to secure efficiency in variety and multiformity in completeness.

‘It has seemed worth while to lay down these rules of ex-

pediency and politeness in the matter of presents, because it is one on which a great amount of misapprehension is not only of possible but of actual occurrence. But another word still remains to be said for the benefit of those friends who, by reason of remoteness of distance, or want of mutual acquaintance with the rest of the social circle of the bride's family, are obliged to act without concert, and entirely, therefore, on their own responsibility. A judicious correspondence with some confidential friend of the bride may possibly result in the discovery of the general character of the presents expected, so far as they have been rumoured or declared. But if they are compelled to proceed in the independence of perfect ignorance of the doings of other people, it will be a kindly act not to grudge a little thought and invention to offer some rarer or more unusual article of use or adornment, in which it is most likely they will *not* be forestalled. Such consideration will be rewarded in this, that the offer of a unique gift will command a unique remembrance of the giver.'

From the wider circle of acquaintance who may gracefully express their kindly interest by their voluntary attendance at church on the occasion of the marriage ceremony, the most valued and intimate friends must be selected for invitation to the wedding-breakfast; the number of guests being calculated according to the accommodation afforded by the house of the bride's parents or guardians, in which it will presumably be given. The connections of the bride will naturally be represented in a much greater proportion than those of the bridegroom, whose father and mother, however, and brothers and sisters, with their wives and husbands, if they are married, must be included. The parents of the bridegroom, indeed, should be treated throughout as the chief guests of the bride's family; and all his relations should be the objects of special courtesy and attention. If the marriage take place in the country, and if the accommodation be sufficiently ample to enable them to be received at such a time without undue embarrassment, it is desirable to invite the parents of the bridegroom, and also the bridesmaids, to stay at the house of the bride's father on the night before the wedding. 'The invitations to each several guest should expressly define the extent and limit of that invitation, where it begins and ends—whether at the house before the ceremony, at the church, at the breakfast, or at the later

festivities which may conclude the day. These and other minute distinctions and directions which it may be convenient to issue may be mentioned in a kind of postscript addressed to each individual, and added to the formal circular invitation which is addressed to all. These forms of invitation are usually purchased at a stationer's. The officiating clergy, as well as the incumbent of the church in which the marriage takes place, whether he personally officiates or not, should be amongst those who receive invitations to the breakfast.'

The parish or district church attended by the bride's family is most frequently chosen as the scene of the ceremony. If the clergyman who is to officiate be not the incumbent or curate, the incumbent's permission *in writing* must be obtained by the bridegroom. Fees are paid to the incumbent, whatever arrangement you may make with the officiating clergyman.

While the bride goes attended by her bevy of bridesmaids, the bridegroom is accompanied only by his 'best man,' who, during the service, stands on his right hand, but a little behind him, and afterwards signs the register in the vestry, and, on behalf of his friend, pays the fees to the clergyman and others. These fees vary from £5 to £25 for the clergyman, according to the bridegroom's position, and from £1 to £5 for the clerk.

The main expense attendant upon the wedding ceremony and festivities is borne by the bride's father; but the bridegroom supplies the wedding-ring, bouquets for the bride and bridesmaids, and presents for the bridesmaids. There is ample precedent and authority, however, for the father of the bride to regard it as his exclusive privilege to present their bouquets to the bridesmaids. This arrangement has the advantage of distributing the opportunities of paying them respect between the two gentlemen who are most closely honoured by their graceful services. The bridesmaids' bouquets should consist of white and coloured flowers, the latter of which might be selected and combined to match the trimmings of their dresses. The presents which are eligible to be offered to the bridesmaids by the bridegroom, who in this particular has no rival to his pretensions, may vary, as gold or silver bouquet-holders, rings, or, again, as lockets on which the monogram of the bride and bridegroom is inscribed. The bouquets are sent on the morning of the wedding-day; the presents, generally, not later than the day before. Sometimes the bridegroom provides the carriage to



convey himself and bride from the church to the house where the wedding-breakfast is given, and from thence to the railway station, or the place selected for the honeymoon ; but very often this duty is undertaken by the bride's father. The bride's bouquet should be composed of white flowers exclusively—gardenias, for instance, azaleas, or camellias, with a little orange-blossom intertwined.

The bride repairs *to* the church in her father's carriage. If she have sisters and they act as bridesmaids, they, with her mother, precede her, and the carriage returns for her and her father ; but if there be no sisters, her father usually precedes her to the church, and receives her at the church-door, her mother accompanying her in the carriage.

The bride must not be kept waiting at the church. The bridegroom, with his best man and the bridesmaids, should be there to receive her. On her arrival, her father—or the brother, relative, or friend, who may represent him—gives her his right arm, and leads her to the altar, followed by the bridesmaids (walking two and two), and her mother, and the mothers of the bridesmaids.\* Some authorities lay down that during this little *progress*, the bride should take the *left* arm of her father. But this would sacrifice the advantage of being ready at any moment, without obstacle or interval, to assume the left arm of the bridegroom, about the propriety of which opinions do not differ. The bride stands at the bridegroom's left hand, and on the left-hand side of the altar, with her 'father' on *her* left hand, and her mother and married sisters immediately behind him. The bridesmaids are grouped immediately in the rear of these 'leading characters.'

At the beginning of the service, the bride draws off her gloves, and gives them, with her bouquet, to the head bridesmaid to hold.

\* Says Spenser, in his 'Epithalamium' :

' With trembling steps, and humble reverence,  
She cometh in before th' Almighty's view.  
Of her, ye virgins, learn obedience,  
When so ye come into these holy places,  
To humble your proud faces.  
Bring her up to the high altar, that she may  
The sacred ceremonies there partake  
The which do endless matrimony make ;  
And let the roaring organs loudly play  
The praises of the Lord in lively notes.'

Invited guests, during the ceremony, take up their positions in the aisle of the church, or in the pews and chairs. They carry no bouquets, except that the gentlemen may wear posies in their button-holes.

The rite concluded which unites hearts and hands—or, too often, ‘hands, not hearts’—the bride takes the bridegroom’s *left* arm, and, preceded by the officiating clergyman, and followed by her head bridesmaids, parents, and the principal guests, repairs to the vestry, where the register is signed by the bridegroom and herself, the bride’s father, two or three of the nearest relatives, and a few of the chief friends and guests, including always the best man and the head bridesmaid. Meanwhile, the bridesmaids distribute the wedding favours both in the vestry and the church. Favours for ladies have a sprig of orange-blossom, with silver leaves and white satin ribbon; those for the gentlemen, silver oak-leaves and acorns. They are worn on the left side of the coat or bodice.

A lady entering on a second marriage wears neither bridal veil nor orange blossoms; nor can she have bridesmaids or wedding favours. Her dress must not be white, but it may be of a colour closely approaching it. She will wear hat or bonnet, with veil of lace or tulle. Whether she remove her first wedding-ring, or retain it, is left to her own choice; usually it is retained, and the second ring is worn over the first.

After the register has been signed, and the friends and others in the vestry have shaken hands with the bride and offered their congratulations, she takes her husband’s left arm, and, followed by the bridesmaids, they pass down the centre of the church, pausing occasionally to shake hands with any of their friends or relations they may happen to observe.

Then they enter their carriage and drive away, and are followed immediately by the bride’s mother, in order that she may be at home to receive her guests. Those of the company who have not attended the service, or have had no opportunity of speaking to the newly-married couple, offer their congratulations on being shown into the drawing-room, where all assemble prior to the breakfast. Here, on the tables, are displayed the wedding presents, which vary in number and value, according to the position and popularity of the bride. A small paper label, on which is written the donor’s name, is attached to each present.

It is to be understood that everybody invited to a wedding *must*, or ought to, send a present to the bride; and presents are frequently made before the invitations are issued. Invitations are issued fully a fortnight before the eventful day, and may either be by writing or by engraved cards.

The guests, on their arrival, deposit hats and sticks in the hall. The ladies—as well as the bridesmaids—do not remove *their* hats or bonnets, but wear them at the breakfast.

Before the servants announce that all is ready, the host or hostess informs the gentlemen present what ladies they will take down, and, if necessary, introduces them to their temporary partners. This introduction does not constitute the basis of future acquaintance, unless with the consent of the lady.

At a wedding-breakfast, the mothers of the bride and bridegroom take precedence of all the other ladies present. The order of procession on these occasions consists of—first, the bride and bridegroom, the bride taking her husband's left arm; next, the bride's father and the bridegroom's mother, who takes the right arm, as do the other ladies; third, the bridegroom's father and the bride's mother; fourth, the 'best man' and the head bridesmaid; the other bridesmaids with their respective partners; and the remainder of the guests according to their rank.

Wedding-breakfasts are an institution of some antiquity. In Sir John Suckling's famous 'Ballad upon a Wedding,' written about 1635, we find that the breakfast occupies a prominent position:

'Passion o' me! how I run on!  
There's that that would be thought upon,  
I trow, beside the bride:  
The bus'ness of the kitchen's great,  
For it is fit that men should eat;  
Nor was it there denied.

'Just in the nick, the cook knocked thrice,  
And all the waiters in a trice  
His summons did obey;  
Each serving-man, with dish in hand,  
Marched boldly up, like one trained band,  
Presented, and away.

'When all the meat was on the table,  
What man of knife or teeth was able  
To stay to be entreated?

And this the very reason was,  
Before the parson could say Grace,  
The company was seated.

‘Now hats fly off, and youths carouse ;  
Healts first go round, and then the house,  
The bride’s came thick and thick ;  
And when ’twas named another’s health,  
Perhaps he made it hers by stealth,  
And who could help it, Dick?’

But, old as is the custom, it is more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and has as little to recommend and justify it as the custom of celebrating the marriage ceremony in the morning. There is something unnatural and unreal in such a repast under such conditions ; it is not less a burden to the guests, condemned to drink wine and listen to bad speeches in the middle of the day, than to the bride and bridegroom, who, after the excitement of so solemn and important a ceremony, should surely be allowed a little time for quiet reflection and repose. Nor does it seem fitting that the parting of the bride with her parents and sisters should be witnessed by a host of guests assembled for the ostensible purpose of amusement. All those things, moreover, tend to disguise the grave character of the act by which a young girl is taken from her home and its loving shelter, and plunged into a new world of duties and responsibilities ; the act by which she sets a seal upon her past, and opens the book of a mysterious future.

Of late the wedding-breakfast has come, in many cases, to be omitted, and instead a ball or soiree is given in the evening. The bride and bridegroom are thus enabled to make their *adieux* in the privacy of the family circle ; and the bride escapes the pain of being criticised by curious eyes and harassed by the exhibition of emotions, which, however sincere, cannot fail to harass and excite her feelings. The pain is difficult to bear with calmness when the marriage is consecrated by love and the union of hands is also an union of hearts ; what must it, be when the alliance has been dictated by worldly considerations, and involves, perhaps, the sacrifice of long-cherished hopes and dreams ?

Bowing to iron custom, we will suppose, however, that the wedding-feast is duly set forth. It may be either a ‘standing up’ or a ‘sitting down’ breakfast, according to the recom-

mendation of a great and wise authority. In the latter case, the bride and bridegroom sit either at the head or the centre of a long table—the bride at the bridegroom's left hand; the bride's father and the bridegroom's mother next to the bride; the bride's mother and the bridegroom's father next to the bridegroom. In the former case a long buffet is provided, with a few small round tables, as for a ball supper; the tables being for the accommodation of the bride and bridegroom, their relatives, and the principal guests. The *menu* of the breakfast—or luncheon (for such it really is)—consists of soups, fish, entrées, chicken, game, mayonnaise, ham, tongue, jellies, creams, and the like—the table being duly ornamented with flowers. Champagne and other wines are served instead of tea and coffee.

Speeches at a wedding-breakfast are now both few and brief. The principal guest proposes the health of the bride, to which the bridegroom responds, and he in his turn proposes the bridesmaids, for whom the best man answers. Sometimes the health of the parents is drunk, and even that of the officiating clergyman. Previous to the health-giving the bride cuts the cake, which is then removed to a side-table by a servant, and divided into pieces, one for each guest. As soon as the speeches are concluded, the bride withdraws to assume her travelling attire, and the guests adjourn to the drawing-room to await her reappearance. The adieux should be made as quickly as possible, and then the parents follow the 'happy couple' down into the hall.

Of individual speeches much might be said; but having regard to the economy of time, I take the following guiding principle from an author to whose taste and judgment I have more than once been indebted: 'The entire series of speeches should be as complimentary and genial *all round* as sincerity will allow. Marriage is a connection of families as real, though not so close, as of persons; and there should be every symptom and expression of *perfect content*—if these words are weighed, there can be nothing more calmly powerful—in giving and being given, in receiving and being received. The demeanour of every member of the families interested should be such as to give the assurance that there is no reserve in the heartiness and *totality* of satisfaction and welcome on both sides with which the alliance is regarded. Even if this condition of per-



fect content be somewhat forced or simulated, it is a wise as well as a politic assumption, seeing that it is calculated to bring about its own reality. Prudent people may be known by the grace and graciousness with which they accept the inevitable. There should, on the other hand, be the utmost possible repression of gush and effusion. It is better to carry an entire audience to a reasonable goal than only a portion of them into a region of sentimental excesses in which the imperfectly sympathetic are sure to become critical, if not cynical. The bridegroom should avoid indulgence in self-depreciation ; he will not insist so much on his unworthiness of his good fortune as on his determination to prove himself worthy of it. And if he finds himself speaking in the presence of some of his own friends to whom the bride is a stranger, but under whose observation the rest of her life is to be passed, he will not add to the difficulties incidental to her new sphere and position by extravagantly drawing a super-ideal picture with which she can never expect to conform.'

We are a conservative people, and cling to the old traditions most firmly when they have least to recommend them : two white satin slippers, therefore, must be thrown after the bride, one by the best man, the other by the bridesmaid, as a sign that she is dismissed from the ranks of the unmarried ; and handfuls of rice scattered by the matrons, in token that she is thenceforth received into their honoured and honourable body. The bride and bridegroom enter their travelling-carriage and drive away—the bride thus passing out of the world of her maiden youth into the new vague world of married life, depending on the constancy and truthfulness of him to whom she has surrendered all that she has of purest, best, and sweetest :

‘ And o’er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro’ all the world she follows him.’

It is no longer usual to send cake or cards to distant friends ; and, in fact, the notification in the advertisement of a marriage, ‘ No cards,’ has been abandoned.

The honeymoon is seldom protracted beyond ten days or a fortnight. On its conclusion, the bride reappears in society, and for three months, the first time she dines at any house she generally takes precedence, as a bride, of all other ladies.

For these dinners she usually wears her wedding-dress, but without the orange flowers.

The wedding presents are sent to the bride's house immediately after the marriage. It would be vulgar, however, to use them for purposes of display.

In these pages I do not wish to devote to the ephemeral observances of society the space which might be better occupied with a statement of the necessary principles of etiquette and its more permanent practices. A minute and elaborate exposition of the existing fashions in dress might in a month become antiquated and irrelevant. Yet in a wedding ceremony the details of costume are of so *compelling* an interest, and play so conspicuous a part, that some reference to them seems not only proper but unavoidable.

The bridegroom's attire is quickly disposed of—a dark-blue frock coat, white waistcoat, and light-coloured trousers, with plain light neck-tie and white or pale lavender gloves.

The bride's is much more elaborate: in truth, what masculine pen can do justice to it? There is the exquisite wreath that binds the fair young head; the rich flowing veil of lace, depending to the very feet; the dress of some delicate material which enchants by its combined simplicity and elegance. It occurs to the present writer that he cannot do better than transcribe from authentic sources the particulars of bridal dresses which have actually been worn.

1. White satin, covered with lace, and trimmed with wreaths of orange-blossoms; the veil fastened with a diamond anchor, necklace of pearls.

The bridesmaids:—Princesse dresses of striped white Pekin, trimmed with Breton lace. The robes laced at the back; paniers at the side, and the bodies cut square and filled in with figured net, the sleeves of the same and transparent, a cuff of lace round the neck. The caps of white lace, with a white flower on one side.

2. The bride:—Ivory satin and broché, with chenille and pearl fringe; the wreath composed of real flowers.

The bridesmaids:—White *barège*, trimmed with Breton lace, white mob-caps with shamrocks and dog-roses.

3. The bride:—Pearl-white satin, trimmed with antique Mechlin lace; wreaths of natural orange-blossom around the head and neck, under a tulle veil.

The bridesmaids :—Mousseline de laine and satin, lace mob-caps, silver bracelets (the gift of the bridegroom).

4. The bride :—White duchesse satin, trimmed with a thick ruche of white tulle round the edge of the long train, with trails of orange-blossom down the front, which was made *en Princesse*, and fastened with real pearl buttons ; a small spray of orange-blossom in the hair, long white tulle veil.

The bridesmaids :—White dresses trimmed with embroideries, and pale blue and white hats.

5. The bride :—White duchesse satin, with brocade train, and wreath of orange-blossoms and tulle veil, fastened with a diamond star.

The bridesmaids :—Pearl satin, with broché trains, trimmed with pale blue ; capotes to match.

6. The bride :—Train and bodice of white brocade, trimmed with lace and orange-blossoms, and fastened with diamonds ; the front of the skirt covered with deep flounces of old lace, the wreath and tulle veil secured by magnificent diamond butterflies.

The bridesmaids :—Shot peacock and gold silk, intertwined with pale peacock, laced at the back ; capotes of the same silk and velvet ; an ostrich feather in front.

7. The bride :—White silk, the train opening with paniers in front, bordered with a flat wreath of orange-blossoms and leaves ; on either side of the front breadth tulle and satin plissés and rich lace ; train at the back square, and richly trimmed with lace ; the veil of white tulle, with a wreath of orange-blossoms.

The bridesmaids :—Cream washing silk, embroidered in rose-pink, the same shade being introduced into the cap-like bonnets.

8. The bride :—Pearl-white satin duchesse, with long train, trimmed with crêpe lisse and orange-blossoms, with a bunch of natural edelweiss ; round her neck a string of large pearls, and on her head a wreath of orange-blossoms, with a diamond tiara.

The bridesmaids :—Indian muslin ; each carried a bouquet of white flowers, and wore a jewelled pin, composed of pearls and diamonds, the gift of the bridegroom.

9. The bride :—Princesse dress of rich duchesse satin, trimmed with old point d'Alençon lace, and wreaths and

bunches of orange-blossoms ; tulle veil embroidered with pearls.

The bridesmaids :—White satin foulard, and navy-blue satin with cream lace ; hats of fine white straw *en suite*, with long white ostrich-feathers and jays' wings.

10. The bride :—White duchesse satin made *à la Princesse*, with very long train, trimmed with Brussels lace, gown and train relieved by small bouquets of orange-blossom ; large Brussels lace veil.

The bridesmaids :—Petticoats of cream-coloured Cashmere, Pekin bodices trimmed with old lace, and Gainsborough hats with feathers to correspond.

11. The bride :—Cream-coloured satin, the train trimmed with lace and bouquets of orange-blossoms and stephanotis, the wreaths composed of similar flowers, covered with ample veil of Brussels lace.

The bridesmaids :—Princesse dresses of cream-coloured Cashmere, trimmed with pale-blue satin ; Vaudeville hats lined with blue, and trimmed with cream-coloured ostrich feathers and Breton lace.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### AT COURT.

‘Seest thou a man diligent in his business ?  
He shall stand before kings.’

*Proverbs xxii. 29.*

Presentations at Court—How they are to be Obtained—Rules by which they are Governed—Regulations Observed at Levees and Drawing-rooms—The Levee—Court Dress for Gentlemen—Arrival at St. James’s—Scene in the State Apartments—Admission to the Presence—A Striking Pageant—A Digression upon Beards—A Blaze of Uniforms—Variety of Costumes—End of the Levee—Description of a Levee—Privileges Enjoyed by Persons who have been Presented—Drawing-rooms—Ceremony Observed on these Occasions—Ladies’ Dress at a Drawing-room—Description of a Drawing-room—Advice to Ladies attending Drawing-rooms—Drawing-rooms at Dublin Castle—A Miniature Court and an Interesting Spectacle—A State Ball at Dublin Castle.



PRESENTATIONS at Court are valued because they place the persons so favoured within the charmed circle of fashionable Society, and confer upon them a definite social position. They are, therefore, very properly fenced round with certain restrictions, though these are not so rigid as they were in the days of the Georges. Formerly, only persons of undisputed rank and breeding claimed access to the royal presence ; but the privilege is now extended to the clergy, military and naval officers, physicians and barristers, and their wives and daughters, as well as to the families of merchants, bankers, members of the Stock Exchange, and manufacturers of the higher class. Artists and littérateurs of repute are also admitted, but not necessarily or usually any member of their families.

A lady who desires to be presented applies to a relative or friend who has already undergone invitation. In making the



application she asks no slight favour, as the lady presenting is held responsible for the moral and social fitness of the lady presented, and must personally attend the drawing-room at which the presentation is to be made. No *unmarried* lady can exercise this privilege. Official presentations are undertaken by the various foreign ambassadors, by the wives of her Majesty's Ministers, and by the wives of other official personages in various departments of the State.

A lady who has once been presented can afterwards attend the drawing-rooms in her own right, unless in the interval she should be married, or married a second time, when she would require to be again presented.

Four drawing-rooms are held yearly: the first in February, the second in March, and the others in May. Due notice of the date of each is given by the Lord Chamberlain in the *London Gazette*, whence it is copied into the daily newspapers. A lady, however, is not expected to attend more than one out of the four. The hour fixed is either two or three. The Queen usually remains in the throne-room about an hour, after which she deposes the Princess of Wales to take her place. The Queen stands all the time; so does the Princess of Wales; and so do those members of the Royal Family who may happen to be present. When there is a large number of presentations the ceremony is very fatiguing, and of late years her Majesty has suffered severely from it.

The regulations to be observed are as follow. They apply to ladies as well as to gentlemen, and to drawing-rooms as well as to levees:—

‘The noblemen and gentlemen, who propose to attend her Majesty’s levees at Buckingham Palace, are requested to bring with them two large cards, with their names *clearly written* thereon, one to be left with the Queen’s Page in attendance in the corridor, and the other to be delivered to the Lord Chamberlain, who will announce the name to the Queen.

#### ‘PRESENTATIONS.

‘Any nobleman or gentleman who proposes to be presented to the Queen must leave at the Lord Chamberlain’s office, *before twelve o’clock*, two clear days before the levee, a card with his name written thereon, and with the name of the nobleman or gentleman by whom he is to be presented. In order to carry out the existing regulation, that no presentation can be made at a levee excepting by a person actually attending that levee, it is also necessary that a letter from the nobleman or gentleman who is to make the presentation, stating it to be his intention to be present, should accompany the presentation card above referred to, which will be submitted to the

Queen for her Majesty's approbation. It is her Majesty's command, that no presentations shall be made at the levee, except in accordance with the above regulations.

'It is particularly requested, that in every case the name be *very distinctly written* upon the cards to be delivered to the Lord Chamberlain, in order that there may be no difficulty in announcing them to the Queen.

'The State Apartments will not be open for the reception of the company coming to Court until half-past one o'clock.'

Let us first direct our attention to the levee, which is attended only by gentlemen. There are four held every year at St. James's Palace, the Prince of Wales representing her Majesty. Gentlemen desirous of being presented apply to their relatives and friends who have already been presented, or they are presented (more commonly) by the heads of the profession or department to which they belong. In the latter case there is generally something of an official as well as a personal character in the presentation. Naval or military gentlemen would look for their sponsors to the Admiralty, the Horse Guards, or the War Office; or, again, to their more immediate superiors in their several services. Indian and colonial gentlemen would seek the tutelage of the Secretaries of State respectively charged with their quasi-national affairs; unless, possibly, in the case of colonies which have recently sent accredited agents to reside in this country, by whom visitors from the colonies might claim or elect to be presented. This alternative would be in conformity with the rule in virtue of which the natives of any foreign country would look to their ambassador or other diplomatic representative in London as the proper channel of approach to her Majesty. The heads and leading officials of municipalities, and other gentlemen engaged in the domestic administration of the country, rely upon the good offices of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, as their wives do upon those of *his* wife, or of the lady who, if he be a bachelor or a widower, accepts the responsibility of such a duty and privilege. Possibly, as full an illustration of municipal presentations as can readily be afforded is when the Lord Mayor of London and the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex attend at Court, which generally happens at the earliest moment after the assumption of their official dignities. Each of these magnates is attended by his chaplain, whom he presents after having been himself presented; and, in addition, the sheriffs are each attended by an under-sheriff, in whose favour they are allowed

to exercise at once their newly acquired right of presentation. They must be presented again and again at every forward stage in their career. Thus, a clergyman who is made an arch-deacon must be a second time presented; a third time if he obtain a deanery, and a fourth if he be advanced to a bishopric.

Having obtained a presentation, we must next consider our costume. If we belong to the army, navy, militia, volunteers, or yeomanry, or boast of a deputy-lieutenancy, we wear full-dress uniform. Half-pay officers, however, wear a regulation uniform. If we are at the bar, or hold a benefice in the Church, we wear our official full dress; but it will save some disappointment if doctors of divinity and other graduates of universities will remember not to embarrass themselves with the hoods belonging to their academical standing. If, acting upon a natural and even loyal calculation, they should don these wardrobe distinctions by way of placing all their *possible* of glory at the foot of the throne, they would find themselves deprived of them before they were allowed to reach the royal presence. It seems a pity that this deprivation should be the rule for an element of further variety and picturesqueness in the *tout ensemble* is thereby sacrificed; and fighting men of both services, who suppress nothing but foreign orders, seem to enjoy a preference over the reverend or the learned civilian. There is a suggestion of comfort and convenience in the arrangement, however; for the academical hood is occasionally bulky, does not always lie flat on the back, and when it does not is in a crowd provocative of entanglement. But if we are civilians, without any rank, inherited or acquired, we attire ourselves in court dress, either of cloth or velvet. When the suit is of cloth, it consists of claret-coloured trousers, with a narrow gold stripe down the side; dress coat, single-breasted, with broad collar, cuffs, and pocket-flaps; white waistcoat and white tie, cocked hat and sword. When the dress is of velvet, the coat is emblazoned with bright steel buttons, and instead of trousers, knee-breeches, with silk stockings, shoes, and buckles, are worn. The colour for velvet is black. Gentlemen attending levees wear gloves, but usually remove the right-hand glove before entering the Throne Room, in case the Prince of Wales should be pleased to shake hands with them—an honour reserved, however, for those with whom he is personally acquainted.

All preliminaries disposed of, and the eventful day having arrived, we enter the vehicle chartered for the occasion, and proceed to St. James's Palace. On stepping out, we are received with no particular deference by some of the royal servants, and passing the Gentlemen-at-Arms and Yeomen of the Guard, enter the corridor, where, at a table superintended by certain household officials, we deposit one of the two cards with which, in accordance with the regulations, we have come provided. Our presenter, observe, does not accompany us, though he is required to attend the same levee. We cannot help the reflection that if he would only take us by the hand, push us forward, and genially accost H.R.H. with 'Here, your Royal Highness, is an excellent friend of mine, a loyal subject of your royal mother!' 'twould be very nice.

But this is not to be. Grasping our other card, we ascend the staircase—which is dotted with various officials, all apparently sinking under a weight of serious responsibility—to the State Apartments. But as these are not very spacious, we are kept waiting at each doorway, in order that the gentlemen who have preceded us may pass into the Throne Room without 'a crush.' Such delays are very trying, and bring out the idiosyncrasies of individuals in what is sometimes an amusing manner. It is said that a certain provincial mayor, when presented on some public occasion, was grievously annoyed that no refreshments whiled away these disagreeable pauses. 'I thought at least,' he was heard to mutter, 'that there would be a cut of beef and a glass of sherry to be had at the sideboard.' Patient wisdom makes the best of the inevitable; friends talk to friends, while others refresh their memories with the historical associations of the place, meditate upon the pictures, and contemplate the quaint decorations.

At last our turn comes, and we enter the main saloon, adjoining the Throne Room. Here we wait once more; not, however, before a doorway, but in the midst of the bulk of the company who have not passed through, and of the 'general circle,' who do attend not to undergo the process of presentation, but as a mark of loyal respect, and partly perhaps for their own amusement. The room is divided by a transverse barrier, the other side of which leads to a narrow passage, also partitioned lengthwise, and opening on the door of the Throne Room. As the pause at this point is generally a long one, we



have time to look about us, and enjoy a very novel and stirring spectacle.

We notice first the preponderance of uniform, and are struck by the number of peaceable civilians who for the nonce blossom forth into gorgeous military array. This arises in a great measure from the universal dislike to the normal court dress, which is assuredly neither picturesque nor convenient ; so that everybody dons a uniform who has the slightest excuse for doing so. It has been well said that no reason exists why a gentleman must enter the presence of his sovereign in an obsolete and grotesque dress, so entirely different in character from that which he is accustomed to wear, as not to be worn without a sense of discomfort and ridicule. In cases where special arrangements have been made for civilians, we find no adherence to the old type. There is no want of fitness in the Diplomatic, the Consular, and the Civil Service uniforms, or even in the Windsor uniform ; but as everybody cannot be in her Majesty's service, it seems unfair to attach such a penalty to non-membership as the existing court dress imposes. The substitution of trousers for knee-breeches was a step in the right direction ; but what is needed is the introduction of a kind of non-official uniform in harmony with the custom and taste of the present day.

Looking around us, we observe many faces made familiar to us by the art of the photographer and the engraver. Yonder is the Prime Minister for the time being, whilst close beside him is his lieutenant, probably the Secretary of State for some leading department of the Administration. Other members of the Cabinet are present, and some of the leaders of her Majesty's Opposition ; as well as the general fresh with his distinctions from the most recent theatre of war. The Diplomatic circle is largely attended. We recognise at once the Turkish ambassador. Near him stands the representative of the French Republic, and within a few feet of him is the American minister. Here comes the Lord Chief Justice of England, whose judicial robes belong to a past age ; but who would wish them changed ? The wig, it is true, dates only from the end of the seventeenth century, but though it has been the object of frequent satire, we suspect the majority of Englishmen would as soon part with the House of Peers as dispense with its 'boundless convexity of frizz.' The Queen's



Counsel, of whom several are present, wear similarly portentous head-gear: like the serjeants-at-law, they are shaven as to their upper lips and chins—a curious distinction, nowadays, when almost everybody wears moustache or beard.

The variety of beards is indeed a subject for profound meditation. Some are long and bushy; some parted; some reduced to a mere fringe, as if the wearer were secretly ashamed of his hirsute appendage; some are trimly rounded, like a cockscomb; others vanish into a small tuft; others wave in a couple of fan-like curves. The moustaches are not less various: some are thin and straggling; others bristling and defiant; some are carefully curved on either side of the mouth; some turn up like the horns of the crescent moon; a few develope into the long thin twisted ends of the moustache made popular by Louis Napoleon; some leave the mouth exposed to preserve its expressiveness; others close over it completely, and make the lower half of the countenance as dull and meaningless as a mask. There is much significance in these things; and a hint as to the marked features of a man's character may be obtained from his beard or moustache.

Among the gownsmen we note several Doctors of Divinity, who, with LL.D.s and D.C.L.s, help to tone down the glare of scarlet and blue and even white and gold uniforms so prevalent upon State occasions. Some of these uniforms, however, are very handsome; as, for example, those of the Life Guards and the Royal Blues; and some of their wearers are fine stalwart fellows, though others are small, undersized men, whom their gorgeous panoply seems to overweight and deaden. On the principle that he who drives fat oxen should himself be fat, the officers of these regiments, called upon to command squadrons of robust 'six-footers,' ought themselves to be Anaks; but there is no regulation standard (physically) for officers. The Foot Guards make a good show. Among the Volunteer officers many are 'well set up,' with a real soldierly air, and in their neat uniforms do no discredit to our reserve forces. There are a couple of 'Plungers'—the favourite heroes of novelists of the 'Guy Livingstone' school—and in their gorgeous uniforms they impress the eye wonderfully. Not less effective are their companions, two of the Light Cavalry, an Hussar, and a Lancer, in dress which, if less sumptuous, is possibly more picturesque. The medals on their manly breasts

bear witness to the service they have seen. One rode in the cavalry fight at Balaklava ; the other saw some of the hottest scenes of the Indian Mutiny.

The word 'Indian' reminds us of a very conspicuous personage, who shines out among all the rest in a short collarless green tunic, loaded with bullion. He wears red breeches, and boots with gold-embroidered tops reaching half-way up the thigh. In his hand he carries a helmet covered with purple velvet, and blazing like his tunic with gold. He is one of the most distinguished of Indian troopers, a commandant of irregular cavalry, and his 'Star of India' insignia attest his claim to the respectful admiration of his countrymen.

Passing over the officers of the Line and the Militia, whose plain scarlet tunics are put out of countenance by the splendid habiliments of the horsemen, and the effective dark-blue uniforms of the representatives of the Navy, we linger for a moment among the Deputy Lieutenants, who are brave in their cocked-hats and plumes, their epaulettes, their sashes round the waist, and their tail-coats resplendent with gold-lace. The part played by Deputy Lieutenants in the economy of creation seems as undefined and undefinable as that of archdeacons, who, according to a well-known episcopal definition, 'perform archidiaconal functions.' It is said that they hold local charges under lord-lieutenants, and are responsible for certain contingents of the county militia ; but nobody ever heard of a Deputy Lieutenant doing anything ; nor does he ever appear on the public stage, I think, except at levees, and to move or second an address in the House of Commons. He ranks with a lieutenant-colonel ; but wears no sword, and could not appear mounted in uniform, while any attempt on his part to take a place among the staff of (say) General Lysons, or 'the Major-General commanding the district,' would expose him to inextinguishable ridicule. One thing is certain, however, that a man is not made a Deputy Lieutenant unless he has 'a stake in the county ;' and in this consideration, and in the splendour of his uniform, the great soul of a Deputy Lieutenant must learn to be content.

But a movement now takes place towards the barrier on the left. It is open, and the brilliant crowd moving through to the right, pour into the narrow passage that leads to the Presence Chamber. An official, taking your reserve card,

observes that 'Gentlemen will please to walk in single file'—an arrangement which prevents pressure, but separates friends; and we proceed in due order through the door, and then round to the right where stands Royalty, attended by a glittering suite. We are conscious of the presence of a handsome and somewhat portly personage, with a good-humoured countenance, a tawny moustache and beard, but considerable baldness on the top of the head. Our name is read aloud from our card; we make a respectful obeisance; and are received with a pleasant smile and slight bow. There is no kissing of hands; but when the Prince recognises an acquaintance, he steps forward, shakes hands heartily, and makes some genial remark. As we have not the honour to count Albert Edward on our 'list of friends,' we pass on and out of the presence, and prepare to regain our home.

Levees nowadays are purely formal and ceremonial affairs; but times have been when they were the scenes of intense political excitement; and when quidnuncs and the hangers-on of the Court watched eagerly the kind of reception accorded by Royalty to this minister or that, and augured the fall of Cabinets from the frown that gloomed on royal brows, or were cheered by the sunshine of royal smiles to hope for a continued lease of power or place. Think of some of the levees held in the last years of Queen Anne's reign, or of those held by George III. before he was stricken down by mental disease, and consider what jealousies and fears, anticipations and prognostications, thronged about and around them. *Then*, indeed, a levee was part of the political comedy of the day; *now*, it is but a pageant, and has only a social importance. The old order has changed, and the new has worked wonders at St. James's as elsewhere.

To this description shall be appended some notes of a levee held during the season of 1880, which enjoyed the distinction of her Majesty's presence. I condense them from a contribution which appeared at the time in the columns of the *World*.

Long before two p.m., a great gathering of officers and gentlemen might be seen in front of Buckingham Palace, and amongst it, with kaleidoscopic effect, glittered every uniform worn by mankind, from China to Peru, or Afghanistan to the

Cape of Good Hope. The following is the order of procedure at a levee :

At 1.30 o'clock the various Court officials begin to arrive, and take their places. The Yeomen of the Guard, popularly known as Beefeaters (*Buffetiers*), assemble in the entrance-hall of the Palace, and are posted along the staircase and at the several approaches. At one of these, adjoining the entrée-room, two men of this corps stood, who would have rejoiced the heart of Frederick the Great, each of them a giant measuring six feet four and a half inches in his stocking-soles. About this time also her Majesty's Body-guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms muster in the Picture Gallery ; and, after being told off by the adjutant, march to their several posts in the Royal apartments ; two members of this corps have the privilege of standing in the Presence Chamber, opposite the Throne, and this is taken in rotation.

By three o'clock, all the preliminaries are completed ; and in front and by the side of the Throne, the ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting, together with the other officials of the household and privileged persons, such as her Majesty's Ministers and the Gold and Silver Sticks, stand in picturesque groups awaiting the Queen's arrival. At five minutes past the hour the door on the right hand of the Throne is opened ; and her Majesty, attended by her two pages, wearing the prettiest uniform imaginable, and followed by the members of the Royal Family and her personal retinue, enter, and pass to their places just in front of the Throne, and standing on the floor itself ; her Majesty being on the right, the Princess Beatrice next on her left, and after her, on this occasion, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, the Duke of Cambridge, the Prince Leiningen, and Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar.

The captain of the Queen's Guard, in full uniform, with his tall bearskin rising above the crowd, then advances, and, after saluting with his hand, presents the guard report for the day. The Field-officer in Brigade waiting is also in attendance. This formality at an end, the levee begins : the Foreign Ambassadors and Ministers are introduced in the order of precedence, the American Minister being easily recognised by his plain evening dress ; and then the presentations in the Diplomatic circle are made, and the general circle pass through. Meanwhile the band is playing briskly in the quad-

rangle, and the strains of merry music flow in through the window, while the human stream flows on past the Throne at the rate of about one hundred every five minutes. Some of England's best blood and manhood are there represented: 'Zulu heroes, like Baker Russell, with the bronze of Afric's sun still on his cheek, looking every inch a soldier; and Chard of Rorke's Drift, with the bronze Victoria Cross on one breast, and on the other two decorations for the preservation of life from the Humane Society; Highland chiefs like Lochiel, Mackenzie of Findon, Lord Perth, and Davidson of Tulloch, all in Highland costume, the last-named full of years, and armed to the teeth with pistols, claymore, dirk, and skean dhu. There are black-robed priests and white-robed Indian Rajahs. Anon, in a cluster, like a moving cloud in a summer sky, come the officers of the Rifle Brigade, in their 'invisible' green uniform; for the first time in her reign twenty-five of them move past her Majesty, their order being that of their regimental seniority; and at an interval, the officers of the 3rd Buffs, to the number of twenty-five, with their light-coloured facings, and forming in this respect a striking contrast to the sombre riflemen, pass muster in like manner.

And so the levee proceeds.

It is worth notice that, on this occasion, it lasted exactly an hour and a half, and in that time no fewer than eighteen hundred persons passed through the Presence Chamber, of whom three hundred and forty-five were presentations. Her Majesty remained an hour and ten minutes—standing all the time, the better to return the obeisances made—after which the Princess Beatrice took her place.

Persons who have been presented at levees (and drawing-rooms) are not thereby entitled to invitations to the State balls or State concerts, though to these entertainments none are invited who have not attended, in the year in which they are given, a drawing-room or levee. Nor are they invited to attend 'a Court,' which is a reception held by her Majesty, and attended only by persons who have received her Majesty's commands. But they possess the privilege of inscribing their names once during the season in her Majesty's visiting-book at Buckingham Palace. This ceremony takes place when her Majesty is residing at the Palace, and the hours fixed for it are generally from three to five in the afternoon.



When the Prince of Wales holds a levee, and the Princess of Wales assists the Queen at a drawing-room, persons attending them have also the privilege of writing their names in the visiting-book of the Prince and Princess at Marlborough House.

Levees are held by the Commander-in-Chief and the First Lord of the Admiralty ; but only for military men in the former case, and for naval men only in the latter.

Levees and drawing-rooms are also held by the Viceroy of Ireland, at Dublin Castle ; but a presentation at the Viceroyal Court does not entitle to a presentation 'at home;' nor does a presentation at Buckingham Palace or St. James's entitle to presentation at Dublin Castle.

As to Drawing-Rooms :—The fair lady, having to display her loyalty to her sovereign, makes her way through groups of attendants to the ante-room or corridor, where one of the lords-in-waiting with his wand spreads out her train, which she has taken the precaution to let down, so that she may walk forward to the Throne Room, and dispose herself gracefully in the Royal presence.

Her name is announced ; she curtsies before her Majesty so low as almost to kneel, and while curtseying, kisses the royal hand extended to her, underneath which she places her own ungloved right hand. Her Majesty kisses the cheek of a peeress or daughter of a peer.

When the Princess of Wales represents her Majesty at a drawing-room, a lady on presentation curtsies only, and does not kiss the Princess's hand.

After passing her Majesty, the presentee curtsies to any of the Princesses near her, and retires backwards, in what may be called a succession of curtsies, until she reaches the threshold of the doorway, where the official in attendance replaces her train upon her arm.

If a lady desire to attend a drawing room, after she has been presented, it is not necessary for her to send any previous intimation to the Lord Chamberlain. She simply takes two large cards with her, having her name clearly written upon them, one of which she gives to the proper official in the ante-room, and the other to the official in the apartment where her Majesty receives. These cards may be obtained at the Palace, but it is better to go provided with them.

When attending a drawing-room, you do not kiss her Majesty's hand as on presentation, but merely curtsy very low to her as you pass. You curtsy also to the leading members of the Royal Family as you pass them, in the order in which they stand. It is as well before you make your *début* to practise the art of curtseying and retiring backward, so as to acquit yourself with easy grace and modest confidence in the Royal presence. Tales are told of ladies who have 'come to grief' by their awkward displays on this occasion, and of others whose nervousness has plunged them into considerable embarrassment.

Ladies attending a drawing-room are not admitted according to their order of precedence, but according to the order in which they arrive. With this exception: a married lady presented at a drawing-room can make a presentation at the same drawing-room, but the person presented by her must enter the Presence Chamber *after* her, though she should arrive first.

The dress to be worn on these occasions is 'evening dress;' bodices cut low, with short sleeves, and a train which, whatever its shape, or however worn, must not be less than three yards in length. The fashion of low bodied dresses is singularly inappropriate for elderly ladies, especially by daylight; and, from a sanitary point of view, very injurious for young ladies on a cold afternoon in the early spring, with, perhaps, a bitter 'north-easter' blowing, and the atmosphere charged with mist and rain; but though it has often provoked severe criticism, it has remained immutable,\* and is understood to be approved by her Majesty.

If the lady presented be unmarried, the dress must be white, and brides always wear white when presented. Other married ladies, if not too elderly, frequently affect white; but they are at liberty to wear whatever colours they prefer. I gratefully transcribe a passage from the pen of a lady, and an expert, which may be of value if any of my readers should employ for their costume a dressmaker who is not accustomed to make court-dresses:—'There are three rules which must be observed, whatever may be the fashion. First, that the dress has a low bodice, neither a square nor a V shape is permitted; second,

\* A medical certificate to the effect that the delicate health of a lady requires the protection of a high dress is the only power that can dispense with a low body, as on the strength of such a certificate the Lord Chamberlain will issue a special permission for its substitution.

that it has a train ; and third, that feathers and lappets are imperative. Young ladies must wear white feathers, two or more, as is most becoming to the head and figure. The lappets are composed of two widths of tulle of at least one yard in length. These lappets are neither hemmed nor trimmed ; they are gathered at the top and fastened over the back hair. There is no rule for dressing the hair ; it is dressed to suit the head and the fashion. A petticoat of tulle, white gauze, or silk, trimmed with lace and flowers, is first put on. The trimming of this petticoat must be in the front, as the train would otherwise hide it. The train is from two and a half to three yards wide, and from three and a half to four yards in length, fastened in box-pleats or gathered to a band at the waist. Sometimes it is fastened from the shoulders, but this style should only be adopted by a lady with an exceptionally elegant figure. The train may be of rich silk or satin, and is considered to hang better if lined ; it is generally trimmed inside with a quilted ruche of tulle or ribbon, and is frequently trimmed over wadding at the bottom to make it fall better. It may be ornamented with embroidery, tulle bouillons, quillings, or lace feather trimming, or with simple flowers ; and may be round, square, or pointed at the bottom. The bodice generally chosen is pointed back and front, and is fastened by lacings at the back. Tulle ruchings, with pearls or not, as preferred, usually finish the top of the bodice ; and flowers may be dotted about, or worn as a bouquet at the front or on the shoulder. The sleeves are now worn very short, and the gloves very long, with a great number of buttons.

‘Necklaces are generally worn ; pearls are mostly suitable for young ladies. Ruchings of lace or tulle, with pearls or diamonds on a band of velvet in the centre, can be worn close round the throat, or in many cases a simple ruche of tulle, with a flower on one side, is chosen by a young lady.

‘The shoes or boots must match the dress, and are mostly made from a piece of the same material.’

The plumes already mentioned are a necessity whether to the married or the unmarried, the plume of the former consisting of three white feathers, the plumes of the latter, generally speaking, of two. The plumes of matrons may, however, be of the colour or the combined colours of their dress, although white plumes are considered more elegant and in better taste

with coloured dresses. The materials chosen for the last should be of the richest and costliest description.

Of a recent drawing-room I find a lively account in a leading Society journal (the *World*). The writer remarks that the weather was not particularly unfavourable; the only drawback being the brilliant sunshine, which, however welcome to out-of-door toilers, and invalids pining for light, was by no means acceptable to the ladies in the immediate vicinity of the windows of the reception-rooms of the Palace. Light and sunshine are admitted to be 'very delightful things as a rule,' but they are not approved of by a woman doubtful of her complexion and *décoletée* at midday; light and sunshine, however, you get with a vengeance in Buckingham Palace. The glare from the long windows is 'positively cruel;' outside blinds would indeed be a boon. It has often been suggested that these grand 'functions' should be held in the evening, and unquestionably it would greatly improve them as spectacles. Bare shoulders, and diamonds, and nodding plumes, strike one by daylight with a sense of incongruity; but by gaslight, or the light of wax tapers, they would seem fitting and right enough, and the effect would be considerably enhanced.

On the occasion we are now considering there was a larger attendance than usual of royalties: the august line even turned the corner, and the Prince of Wales was almost at the curve. The Queen looked exceedingly well, and returned the homage of the ladies who passed before her with gracious condescension. The Princess of Wales was as radiant as ever, and displayed her usual perfect taste in dress. The Princess Frederica, the Princess Beatrice, the good-humoured Duchess of Teck, each had her respective admirers in the loyal crowd.

There was just enough people present, it is said, to make it a full drawing-room, but not so many as to entail crowding or scuffling, except among the morose and ill-behaved. Some there always are who love to push and bustle, though there be not the smallest necessity for the *vi et armis* conduct. The arrangements were excellent, each room being only about half-filled at a time, and there were more chairs than occupants for them. Several ladies, however, preferred to stand all the time, that they might be to the fore as soon as the barrier was opened.

In spite of good fires the rooms were rather chilly. A little

shawl would be an immense comfort to nude shoulders, but at present there is no means of disposing of it before, and recovering it after, passing her Majesty. 'The most trying part of all is waiting for the carriage in the hall, where the draught is fearful, though prudent ladies are careful to be well cloaked. There were very few gentlemen in attendance on the ladies of their family, but the *corps diplomatique*, and gentlemen connected with the Court, diminished the undue proportion of ladies in the rooms after the Throne Room was passed. Two Chinese in native costume, wearing shoes with thick white soles, such as one sees on hand-screens, were moving about, watching the proceedings with great curiosity and interest.'

It is noted that ladies expose themselves to a great deal of needless inconvenience by insisting on starting for the Palace at a uselessly early hour. Before half-past twelve carriages may be seen taking up their position. This is pronounced to be really unnecessary; bad for the horses, and trying for the ladies, who lose their bloom and freshness in the weary time of waiting, and are exposed to the merciless stare of the crowd and the embarrassment of listening to uncompromisingly frank remarks. It has been suggested that ladies should be allowed to wait *in* the Palace instead of outside of it; but very slight advantage would be gained by this concession, as, if the doors of Buckingham Palace were thrown open at nine a.m., some ladies would probably have been in attendance an hour before. The object, of course, is a loyal one; ladies wish to be presented, or to make their curtsies, to the Queen herself; and it is generally known that her Majesty is in the habit of leaving the Throne Room at four o'clock. The writer already quoted remarks that it would seem only fair that ladies who have not been presented before should be allowed to enter the Presence first. It is presumed that those who have already enjoyed the privilege would not object to such an arrangement. In any case, the present 'early departure' is uncalled for and useless. 'If you dress first, lunch at one, get into your carriage at twenty minutes before two; you are pretty sure to be in ample time, and to have the privilege of seeing her Majesty in person.' It must be considered strange that ladies do not undergo a great deal more preparation for the admittedly arduous ordeal of presentation to the Queen. 'The wise virgins, of course, have many private rehearsals; but some



seem absolutely not to know what is expected of them, and even forget to take off their right glove, which has now and then to be torn off by an official at the last moment. To the most self-possessed woman in the world the moment of appearing for the first time in the august Presence must be a nervous one. She should take every precaution to go through the ceremony as creditably as possible.' Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well—even at a drawing-room.

The drawing-rooms at Dublin are, necessarily, inferior to those which are graced by the Royal Presence ; but they have, nevertheless, their features of interest, and in Irish society exercise a potent attraction. There was a time, if Lever's novels may be accepted as authorities, when they had their humoristic and even grotesque features, but nowadays dread Decorum reigns paramount, though not to the extent of crushing out all that is characteristic. At Dublin Castle, by a wise regulation, the drawing-room is always held at night. Previous to the long-looked-for occasion, Paterfamilias, with his wife and his dark-eyed Irish girls, arrives from Galway, Connaught, or Ulster, and 'puts up' at the 'Shelburne' or the 'Bilton,' bent upon a brief but joyous holiday. About the establishment of ———, the famous *modiste*, a crowd of carriages hovers all day long ; while the interior is a scene of the liveliest bustle and the most desperate industry. Trains and corsages strew the chairs and floors, and the 'latest fashions' form the theme of long and serious conversations. All Dublin shows signs of festivity ; every hotel is full ; every hair-dresser, native and foreign, is engaged twenty deep. The drawing-room, moreover, is but the initial one of a series of gaieties ; State banquets follow, and State balls, and dinners and evening parties, and all those gatherings of the cream of society which are so delightful to the young, and so wearisome to the old.

The windows glitter with lights all round the Castle-yard, and in the central area may be discovered a blaze of uniforms ; while the long line of carriages creeps gradually up, and like an Alexandrine, drags its slow length along, to the intense gratification of a curious crowd. The gorgeous current of 'feathers, lappets, and diamonds' ripples up the grand staircase, through a double row of soldiers and liveried servants. Swelling on the billows of her gorgeous train, like some stately swan, with her graceful cygnets behind, the matron sails on

into the crush-room, where are assembled all the postulants, gaily uniformed, her spouse being probaby a deputy-lieutenant, an honour much coveted because of its silver and scarlet dress. The variety of uniforms at a Dublin Castle show is one of its peculiarities. Even such functionaries as 'inspectors of prisons' and 'clerks of the crown' ruffle it in their distinctive bravery. The police officers wear a neat rifle equipment; militia officers are as thick as blackberries; the judges muster, and the great officers of state. In the 'throne-room,' which glows with gold and crimson, stands the duke or earl who represents royalty, the centre of a galaxy of glittering officers, who pass the card of the presentee from one to the other, and proclaim his correct style and titles. 'Behind stand a few, privileged with the "private entrée,"—and there being some jealousy as to this distinction, the list is duly regulated—who find real entertainment in watching the nervous agitation of the fair and blushing creatures who file past, and have to undergo a somewhat trying probation. Every novice has, as it were, to pay toll, levied with a strict but good-natured severity, and the ascetical *roi fainéant* must find some compensation for the tedium of his duties in the pleasant octroi duties which he unfailingly levies off every fair cheek that passes by him. The charming confusion—the piquant air of indifference, only assumed—the hopeless agony of bewilderment, reaching even to utter blindness, as figures, gold, lights, all merge into one dazzling glitter, without form or coherence—the stumbling over trains—the sinking down in reverent abasement, so as to wholly miss the attendant salute—all this, contrasted with the cool and assured bearing of the regimental "chargers" who have been practised in the business, makes up a most dramatic spectacle for those looking on. Sometimes the fair *débutante*, quite distraught, totters on past everybody and everything, only to be brought back, more dead than alive. Then come the greetings, when everyone crushes and is crushed, and is "so delighted!"

Such are the humours of a drawing-room at 'the Castle.' The writer from whom I am quoting adds a description of 'the ball' which follows, *en suite*. On St. Patrick's night all the (Dublin) world with his wife and daughters attend in full court dress, and the revels open with 'Sir Roger de Coverley,' danced with Irish vivacity. Then ensues such a '*sturm und drang*' of

feathers and lappets, old-fashioned flaps and coat-tails, and entangled trains, as almost to bewilder the spectator. Often a thousand people are present on one of these occasions, when—

‘Soft eyes look love to eyes that speak again,  
And all goes merry as a marriage-bell.’

The smaller and more select balls, of which about half a dozen are given in the year, are usually remarkable for their exceeding pleasantness, and are none the worse, mayhap, for the fantastic procession that inaugurates them of the host and his household, with two livery servants clearing the way, and the guests forming a kind of living avenue. Low bends each form as the band plays ‘God save the Queen;’ on presses the pageant, the half-dozen aides-de-camp in their becoming uniform (coats with sky-blue facings, white waistcoats, and gilt buttons), the ‘gentleman-at-large,’ the ‘physician-in-ordinary,’ the surgeon to the household, the state-steward, and, finally, the ‘ladies of the household,’ married and unmarried. Then the first quadrille is formed, a ‘state’ one being contrived at the top of the room, for the benefit of the lords and lordlings present. On what follows I need not dilate—blithe strains of music, whirling forms, bright eyes, fascinating smiles, soft whispers, lively badinage, exhilarating champagne, ices cool as Arctic snows, unspeakable blisses, and general ecstasy!





## CHAPTER IX.

### HINTS ABOUT TITLES.

'The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that.'

ROBERT BURNS.

How to Address Persons of Title in Conversation—Titles by Virtue of Inheritance and Titles of Courtesy—How to Address Persons of Title by Letter—Forms of Superscription and Signature.



ANY persons when temporarily brought into contact with 'lords and ladies of high degree,' find themselves perplexed as to the right method of addressing them. They do not desire to exhibit any lack of that deference to superior rank which a sensible man will always show; they are not less desirous to avoid any form of address characterised by excessive humility. Titles may be as worthless as republicans and moralists declare them to be; but while they are socially and legally recognised, only a fool or a bore will attempt to ignore them. On the other hand, it is degrading and unmanly to set too high a value upon them, and to grovel in spirit before their wearers. And it is a singular vulgarity to be constantly dragging them into conversation—rolling them on the tongue, as it were, as if such delicious morsels must not be too quickly got rid of. It is said that an Englishman loves a lord, and assuredly many Englishmen and Englishwomen seem to love his title, as if it were something of their own, from which they were accustomed to extract perennial enjoyment. They 'my lord' a man as if the repetition of the magic syllables communicated to themselves a direct personal qualification, while 'your Grace' lifts them up into the seventh heaven of flunkeyism.

I have met with individuals who laboured under the delusion

that the Queen is constantly addressed as 'your Majesty,' but this style is adopted only when the parties addressing her belong to the middle or lower classes—who, it is needless to say, seldom obtain access to her presence. By members of the aristocracy and gentry she is addressed simply as 'madam.' A similar rule applies with respect to the Prince of Wales, who, by the higher divisions of society, is addressed as 'Sir,' and by the lower as 'your Royal Highness.' This is true also in regard to all members of the blood royal.

A foreign princess is addressed as 'Princess' by the aristocracy and gentry, and as 'your Serene Highness' by all other classes. A foreign prince is similarly addressed, 'Prince,' and 'your Serene Highness.' An ambassador is addressed according to his personal rank; except that the lower classes call him 'your Excellency.'

An English duke is 'Duke' to the upper, and 'your Grace' to the lower half of the world.

A duchess, 'Duchess,' and 'your Grace.'

A marquess, 'Lord B.,' and 'my Lord,' or 'your Lordship.'

A marchioness, 'Lady B.,' and 'my Lady,' or 'your Ladyship.'

An earl, 'Lord B.,' and 'my Lord,' or 'your Lordship.'

A countess, 'Lady B.,' and 'my Lady,' or 'your Ladyship.'

A viscount, 'Lord B.,' and 'my Lord,' or 'your Lordship.'

A viscountess, 'Lady B.,' and 'my Lady,' or 'your Ladyship.'

A baron, 'Lord B.,' and 'my Lord,' or 'your Lordship.'

A baroness, 'Lady B.,' and 'my Lady,' or 'your Ladyship.'

The daughters of dukes, marquises, and earls, are addressed by their Christian names, with the prefix of 'lady,' and the addition of the family name. Thus, the daughter of the Marquis of Pumptown would be Lady Mary Dash, and would be so styled by her acquaintances. Intimate friends would call her simply 'Lady Mary.' The same rule applies, with the necessary change of gender, to the younger sons of peers of the three highest orders—as, Lord George Hamilton, Lord Frederick Cavendish. Their wives would come under the same category—as, for instance, Lady George H., Lady Frederick C.

We grant to the younger sons of earls, viscounts, and barons, the courtesy title of 'honourable,' and to the daughters of viscounts and barons; but in conversation the title is never used; we say, 'Mr. Bourke,' not the 'Honourable Mr. Bourke.'



Baronets and knights are addressed by their titles and Christian names—as, Sir George (Campbell); their wives by their titles and surnames—as, Lady Campbell.

An archbishop would be addressed colloquially as ‘your Grace’ by strangers; as ‘archbishop’ by his friends. A bishop as ‘your Lordship’ or ‘my Lord’ in the former case, and as ‘bishop’ in the latter.’ A dean as ‘Mr. Dean’ or ‘dean.’ Their wives have no title, and are simply Mrs. Y., Mrs. X., or Mrs. Z.

Officers of the army and navy are addressed by their rank and name—as, General Wolseley, Major Adair—by strangers and acquaintances; by their rank alone—as, ‘general,’ ‘colonel,’ ‘major’—by their intimate friends. Their wives are Mrs. A., Mrs. B., Mrs. C.

The Lord Mayor is addressed in conversation (unless he be a baronet or knight) as ‘Lord Mayor,’ and his wife as ‘Lady Mayoress.’

Peers sign by the name attached to their title—‘Sutherland,’ ‘Devonshire,’ ‘Glasgow,’ etc.; and they are thus addressed by their wives, as well as, occasionally, by very intimate friends.

It may be convenient if we add some illustrations of the correct form of addressing these illustrious personages in writing.

Letters for her Majesty the Queen are addressed to her private secretary. The enclosure is directed—‘To her Majesty the Queen;’ or, if it be an official communication, ‘To the Queen’s most excellent Majesty.’ The letter itself will begin—‘Madam,’ or ‘May it please your Majesty,’ or ‘Most gracious Sovereign,’ according to its tenour; and will conclude—‘I have the honour to remain, with the profoundest respect, madam, your Majesty’s most faithful and dutiful servant.’

Letters for the Prince and Princess of Wales are sent under cover to their private secretaries, and the enclosure is directed to ‘his’ or ‘her Royal Highness.’ All the Queen’s sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, are addressed as ‘your Royal Highness,’ but her Majesty’s nephews and cousins as ‘your Highness.’ Letters to members of the Royal Family should begin—‘Sir,’ or ‘Madam;’ and end—‘I have the honour to remain, sir (or madam), your Royal Highness’s most dutiful and most obedient servant.’

A letter to a duke or duchess (not one of the Royal Family) should be superscribed—‘To his Grace the Duke of B.’ or ‘To her Grace the Duchess of B.’ To a duke we begin with—‘my Lord Duke;’ to a duchess (as to all ladies, of whatever rank), ‘Madam.’ We conclude—‘I have the honour to be, your Grace’s obedient servant,’ or ‘I have the honour to be, madam, your ladyship’s obedient servant.’

To a marquis the superscription is—‘To the most honourable the Marquis’ (or, some say, ‘To the most noble’). Begin with, ‘my Lord Marquis;’ and end, ‘I have the honour to be, my Lord Marquis, your Lordship’s obedient servant.’

To an earl or countess write—‘To the Right Hon. the Earl (or Countess) of G.’ To a viscount—‘The Right Hon. the Viscount of H.’ To a baron—‘The Right Hon. the Lord V.’ Letters to these peers will all begin alike—‘my Lord.’

The younger sons of earls, and all the sons of viscounts and barons are addressed—‘The Hon. George Talbot;’ and the daughters and sons’ wives, ‘The Hon. Miss T.,’ or ‘The Hon. Mrs. T.’ Letters to these begin—‘Sir,’ or ‘Madam.’

A letter to a baronet is addressed—‘Sir Edward Smith, Bart. ;’ one to a knight, ‘Sir William Jones.’ Letters to baronets, knights, or their wives, begin either ‘dear Sir Edward’ or ‘dear Lady Smith;’ or, where this form of address is not warranted by the relative positions of the two parties, ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam.’

Judges are addressed as ‘right honourable’ or ‘honourable.’ All members of the Privy Council are entitled to the prefix ‘right honourable.’ Members of the Government are addressed according to their rank and office, thus: ‘To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., First Lord of the Treasury;’ or ‘The Right. Hon. Sir W. V. Harcourt, M.P., her Majesty’s Secretary of State for the Home Department;’ or ‘The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.’ A shorter form would be—‘The Right Hon. Sir W. V. Harcourt, M.P., Home Office.’

The initials ‘K.G.’ (Knight of the Garter), ‘K.T.’ (Knight of the Thistle), ‘K.S.I.’ (Knight of the Star of India), ‘G.C.B.’ (Knight Grand Cross of the Bath), ‘K.C.B.’ (Knight Companion of the Bath), and ‘C.B.’ (Companion of the Bath), are added to the names of persons possessing those titles.

In addressing ambassadors, begin ‘my Lord,’ and afterwards use the term ‘your Excellency.’ The same title is used in ad-

addressing the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and the governors of our larger colonies. The Governor-General of Canada is styled 'right honourable.'

Petitions to the House of Peers are addressed—'To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled.' In the body of the address reference is made to 'My Lords, may it please your Lordships;' and the conclusion is, 'And your Lordships' petitioners will ever pray.'

To the House of Commons we superscribe our petition—'To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.' We address it—'May it please your honourable House; and we conclude with—'And your petitioners will ever pray.'

Church dignitaries are addressed as follows :—

'To his Grace the Archbishop of ——.'. . . 'My Lord Archbishop.' . . . 'I am, my Lord Archbishop, your Grace's obedient servant.'

'To the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of ——.'. . . 'My Lord Bishop.' . . . 'I am, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient servant.'

'The Very Rev. the Dean of ——.'. . . 'Very Reverend Sir.'

'The Venerable Archdeacon ——.'. . . 'Reverend Sir.'

Officers of the Army and Navy are addressed as follows :—

'To Field-Marshal H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, K.G., Commander-in-Chief.'

'To Lieutenant-General Sir John ——.'

'To Colonel Lord ——.'

'To Sir John Brown, K.C.B., Vice-Admiral and Commander of the Mediterranean Fleet;' or, 'To Vice-Admiral John Brown.'

'To Sir William Robinson, Captain of H.M.S. *Iron Duke*;' or, 'To Captain Sir William Robinson, H.M.S. *Iron Duke*.'

'Major Jones, 55th Regiment.' 'Major Smith, Royal Engineers.'

'Lieutenant Blank, R.N., H.M.S. *Deucalion*.'





## CHAPTER X.

### A HEALTHY LIFE.

‘Our bodies are our gardens, to which our wills are gardeners.’  
SHAKESPEARE.

‘Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.’  
JUVENAL.

‘Crown’d  
A happy life with a fair death.’  
TENNYSON.

The Cultivation of the Body not less a Duty than Intellectual Cultivation—Young Men and Young Women: Their Faults and Follies—A Homily upon Cleanliness—Its Value is Admitted, but it is not sufficiently carried out—Baths and Bathing—Hot, Tepid, and Cold Baths—The Teeth—Tooth Powders and Tooth Washes—The Hair—Brown, Black, and Blonde Hair—The Poets and the Tresses of their Heroines—Spenser, Dryden, Byron, Tennyson—Cleansing and Strengthening the Hair—Remarks upon Hair Dyes and Washes—A Few Approved Recipes—The Breath and the Teeth—The Eyes—On the Preservation of the Sight—White Hands—The Nails—Belinda’s Toilet: A Thing to be Avoided—On the Care of One’s Personal Appearance—The Feet—Exercise: Its Therapeutic Effect—Various Forms of Exercise—Walking the Best Form of Exercise—Open-air Exercise: How to be Regulated—Other Forms of Exercise Considered—Dancing—Riding—Etiquette of Riding—Hunting—Three Classes of Exercise, and their Various Objects—The Abuse of Exercise Reprehended—It must be Kept within Reasonable Limits—Mental Culture not to be Neglected—Combined Cultivation of Mind and Body makes the True Gentleman—Character of a Gentleman—The Close of Life—Funerals—Etiquette of Mourning—Friends and their Expressions of Sympathy—Periods of Mourning.



**T**is everybody’s duty to cultivate the mind: this is a truism, I think, which provokes no dissent. It is everybody’s duty to keep the body healthy: this is a correlative truism which, if it provoke no dissent, does not command an universal acceptance. At least, if accepted, it is not *acted upon*, and the highest truth is valueless until it is reduced to practice. Even among

the better classes, even among those to whom this book is specially addressed, the neglect of the body is manifest, and not less serious than manifest. 'How can that be?' exclaims a fair lady: 'do I not devote a couple of hours every day to personal adornment?' Madam, the adornment of the person and the health of the body are two different things, wide as the poles asunder. You and your maid are engaged, as you say, two—I think it will be more correct to put it at three—hours daily in the details of the toilette; in dressing and undressing; in endeavouring to submit yourself to the iron requirements of Fashion. But what has this to do with health? Do you take regular and moderate exercise? Do you keep reasonable hours? Do you strike a just balance between recreation and work? Do you live in a wholesome atmosphere? Do you retire early and rise early? Can you answer these questions in the affirmative? Or is it not true that you spend long hours in the vitiated atmosphere of the ball-room, that you retire to bed at a very late hour exhausted with the toil of pleasure, that you do not rise until near midday, that your time is wholly devoted to what you are pleased to call amusement, and that the fresh free air of heaven you breathe only for the brief period of your carriage drive, or, if you ride, of your canter up and down the Lady's Mile? Madam, you are *not* taking care of your health; on the contrary, you are sowing the seeds of disease, and it is to be feared will gather the harvest in the shape of premature death or prolonged debility.

At the end of this lecture up starts Harry Hotspur, with a feeling that *his* withers are unwrung. 'You are quite right, sir,' he exclaims, 'and what you say to Bella is awfully true; but look at me. There is no neglect of the body here! I have my morning tub, and I go in for athletics; I ride, and I shoot, and I play lawn-tennis—ah, you should see me!' 'All this may be true,' I reply, 'but it is not to the purpose. You proceed on no fixed principle. Your athletics are taken up because athletics happen to be fashionable. You ride—yes, a trot in Rotten Row; you shoot—at Hurlingham; you play lawn-tennis—at a garden-party! Meanwhile, you drink too much and smoke too much; you burn the midnight oil—in the billiard-room; you lounge about all day and sit up o' nights; your life is an endless round of dissipation and indolence, un-



inspired by one noble motive or elevated thought or generous purpose. Sir, you too are sowing the wind, and will reap the whirlwind.'

In these pages, however, I cannot consider the *moral* aspect of the question I have started ; just as I am debarred from treating it physiologically. I must be content with such remarks as naturally connect themselves with my general object. I have to do with the care of the body only as it is a part of the philosophy of etiquette and personal culture. On the necessity of cleanliness it would seem superfluous to enlarge ; yet the reader will doubtless have met, even in aristocratic salons, with persons having a very imperfect notion of what it is and means. Cleanliness is by many regarded as a purely personal matter, as a something which affects only the individual ; but, in truth, it concerns the individual's neighbours, and everybody has a right to protest against dirt. Cleanliness, says Addison, renders us agreeable to others ; at all events, it prevents us from *offending them*. And it is in this way that cleanliness is associated with etiquette ; for the *raison d'être* of etiquette is to enable us to meet one another in society on pleasant and harmonious terms. Therefore, Addison goes on to speak of cleanliness as 'a mark of politeness,' and it is universally agreed, he says, that no one unadorned with this virtue can go into company without giving a manifold offence.

In good society the value of cleanliness is admitted, and perhaps it would be difficult nowadays to find ladies with such a forgetfulness of it as to merit the sarcasm which Talleyrand (I think) applied to Madame de Staël at the whist-table : 'Ah, madame, if dirt were trumps, what hands you would have !' Yet, as I have said, we see its laws transgressed by those who ought certainly to know better. Persons who profess a general observance of them neglect them in details. There are others who study them carefully, and take their morning ablutions with laudable regularity, who, nevertheless, do not scruple to plaster their skin with all kinds of unguents and cosmetics. Now many of these compounds contain lead or bismuth, and are really dangerous, while others render the skin sallow, coarse, and hard. They choke up the pores, and retard respiration. Serious nervous affections frequently result from the prolonged use of cosmetics ; while absolute cleanliness is impossible during their employment.

The first condition of cleanliness is, of course, the bath. It has been amusingly said that 'the vessel which is dignified, like a certain part of a lady's dress, with a royal Order, is one on which folios might be written. It has given a name to two towns—Bath and Baden—renowned for their toilets, and it is all that is left to three continents of Roman glory. It is a club-room in Germany and the East, and was an arena in Greece and Rome.' Both to the Orientals and the Romans bathing seems to have been one of the pleasures as well as one of the necessities of life; and they practised it on an almost colossal scale; every villa being fitted up with the most elaborate bathing appurtenances. It will be a good day for the national health when in England the bath is recognised as not less an integral part of every house than the kitchen.

There are three kinds of baths: the hot (ranging from  $95^{\circ}$  to  $105^{\circ}$ ), the tepid (ranging from  $85^{\circ}$  to  $95^{\circ}$ ), and the cold (ranging from  $60^{\circ}$  to  $70^{\circ}$ ). As a daily agent of cleanliness the hot bath is objectionable, and even dangerous, as it exhausts the system and promotes a too rapid circulation. On the other hand, a cold bath is scarcely less dangerous for many persons, especially those of a full temperament, invigorating as it is in certain cases when taken under medical advice.\* The best and safest

\* 'The *immediate* effect of a cold bath is to chill the *surface* of the body, the temperature of which, as tested by a thermometer, may fall several degrees. At the same time there is produced a pallor of the surface and goose-skin. While the surface is cooled, however, the blood itself undergoes an increase of temperature, due to an increase of the combustion processes going on in the body, of which we get additional evidence in the increase of the rate of the pulse and respiration, and an augmented discharge of carbonic acid from the lungs. There is a sudden sense of chilliness, and this impression, made upon the nerves of the skin, produces, by its action on the brain and spinal cord, some slight mental excitement and shivering of the limbs. After the bath has been continued some little time the temperature of the blood falls (sometimes as much as three or four degrees), the pulse and respiration get slow, the shivering gives place to lassitude, and the mental excitement to listlessness. On removal from the bath the phenomenon of "reaction" sets in. The vessels of the skin enlarge, the chilliness gives place to warmth, and the feeling of uneasiness is succeeded by a sense of comfort. This reaction follows most quickly when the bath is of short duration and when its effects are suddenly induced. The shorter the bath the less is the ultimate depression of the temperature of the blood. The shorter the bath the greater is its power of *stimulating* function; the longer it is continued the greater is the effect of *cooling*. The effect of a *warm* bath is to raise slightly the temperature of the surface and the temperature of the blood. The pulse and the respiration are both quickened,

form of bath is the tepid. This it is not necessary to take every day as a complete bath—that is, by way of immersion. All that is required is for the person to sponge the body from head to foot with tepid water, and afterwards rub vigorously with a Turkish towel. In winter the water should be a little warmer than in summer. A hair-glove may be used with advantage instead of towels.

Douche and shower baths should never be employed except under medical advice ; and I deprecate a too frequent recourse to Turkish baths. For all purposes of cleanliness, liberal sponging, such as I have recommended, is sufficient ; and cleanliness is the great sanatory agent.

The skin having been duly attended to, and the body well ventilated (so to speak) by exposure to the fresh air, we are called upon to cleanse the teeth. There is no greater ornament than a set of white, pearly, regular teeth, and yet none is rarer. Partly this is the consequence of neglecting their external treatment ; partly it results from the use of improper diet. Sweets are one of the great enemies to the teeth of the fair sex ; smoking to those of the other. Acids should be avoided, as well as an immoderate use of sugar. Every morning the teeth should be washed with a moderately soft brush and tepid water, again after each meal, and the last thing before retiring to bed. The washing should be thorough, and, after each cleansing, the mouth should be well rinsed with fresh cold water.

I am not an advocate of tooth-powders or tooth-washes ; they are generally injurious. I think it is sufficient to mix with the water one uses a little rose-water occasionally, or a little tincture of myrrh ; but if a powder be employed—and

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and the escape of carbonic acid from the lungs is also increased. The blood-vessels of the skin get dilated, and the surface is reddened in proportion to the heat of the water. Warm baths of a moderate temperature can be borne for a longer time than cold baths ; but if the temperature be too high, and the bath too long continued, faintness is liable to occur. On removal from the bath the skin is in a very delicate and susceptible state, and the vessels are liable to “re-act” in the direction of extreme contraction, in which case dangerous internal congestion may occur. If, however, the skin be protected, and the patient be placed in a warm room, or in bed, violent perspiration will occur. In the cold bath the muscles are liable to become stiff ; but in the warm bath a stiff and fatigued muscle will resume its suppleness. After a hard day’s hunting a warm bath is a well-known and agreeable luxury.’—*Baths and Bathing*, pp. 15, 17.

where tartar accumulates it may be a necessity—the following may be recommended :—

Fine prepared chalk, 3 drachms ; Spanish soap, 1 drachm ; Florentine orris-root, 1 drachm ; carbonate of soda, 1 drachm.

Or this :—Precipitated chalk, 12 drachms ; sulphate of quinine, 6 grains ; rose-pink, 2 drachms ; carbonate of magnesia, 1 drachm.

As a wash :—Dissolve 2 ounces of borax in 3 pints of boiling water, and as the solution cools mix with it 1 tablespoonful of spirits of camphor, and 1 teaspoonful of tincture of myrrh. Keep in a well-stoppered bottle, and for use mix about 2 tablespoonfuls with a gill of lukewarm water.

‘A good head of hair’ is no slight ornament to a man ; to the completion of a woman’s beauty it is indispensable. What would our poets have done had their mistresses been bald ? Where would be the heroines of our novelists if they wore wigs ? Terrible thought ! How much fine poetry, how many exquisite similes, would the world have lost ! For to celebrate in prose or verse a woman wanting woman’s greatest personal charm would have been, must ever be, an impossibility. No, Beauty does not draw us by a ‘single hair,’ but by the rich and graceful flow of abundant tresses, whether these be black as night, brown as the chestnut, or golden as gold. Therefore let every woman pay due attention to ‘that robe which curious Nature weaves to hang upon the head.’ She may not rejoice in such a profusion as Tennyson’s Godiva, who—

‘Showered the rippled ringlets to her knee,—’

here, by the way, I am reminded of Romola’s hair, ‘which was of a reddish golden colour, enriched by an unbroken small ripple, such as may be seen in the sunset clouds on grandest autumnal evenings’—but if she do not neglect it, she will have enough to frame a comely face, enough for a lover to swear by. As for its colour, *that* she cannot help, and must not endeavour to change by the use of any abominable pigments or decoctions. There is a good deal to be said for almost every hue under the sun. Even red has its admirers ; and if it be not a fiery red, like Bardolph’s nose, but with a touch of gold in it, well will it harmonise with a snowy complexion—with one of those fair white skins which show every azure vein, and on the forehead seems, like the hair, to be suffused with a warm

golden light. Jane Eyre, you know, had red hair, though hardly such red hair as this. Brown and black, and the dark chestnut shade between, and the light-brown which is bathed in sunshine—each has its heroines and its poets. Spenser endows the false Duessa with ‘golden locks;’ but then he gives them also to his gentle Lena, as well as to the damozel whom Guyon surprises bathing :

‘The *fair locks*, which formerly were bound  
Up in one knot, she low adown did lose,  
Which flowing low and thick her clothed around,  
And the ivory in *golden mantle* bound.’

As a contrast, Dryden’s Iphigenia is decked with ‘raven-glossy hair.’ Another contrast, Byron’s Medora, belongs to the blondes. When her Corsair husband, on his return to their romantic island home, clasped her in his arms—

‘Her long *fair hair* lay floating o’er his arms,  
In all the wildness of dishevell’d charms.’

Strange to say, the poet represents Gulnare, the Harem queen, as of the same order of loveliness :—

‘That form, with eye so dark, and cheek so fair,  
And *auburn waves* of gemmed and braided hair.’

Byron must have been partial to hair ‘of this colour,’ for his Haidée is adorned with it :—

‘Her hair’s long *auburn waves* down to her heel  
Flow’d like an Alpine torrent which the sun  
Dyes with his morning light, and would conceal  
Her person, if allowed at large to run,  
And still they seemed resentfully to feel  
The silken fillet’s curb, and sought to shun  
Their bonds whene’er some Zephyr caught began  
To offer his young pinion as her fan.’

Tennyson’s Adeline has ‘floating flaxen hair.’ Of his Eleänore he simply tells us that she has ‘tresses unconfined.’ Idalian Aphrodite, beautiful, when CEnone saw her—

‘With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
Ambrosial, *golden round her lucid throat*  
And shoulders.’

Of the Gardener’s Daughter the poet tells us that—

‘A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
Poured on one side : the shadow of the flowers  
Stole all the *golden gloss*.’



And if we turn to his Arthurian beauties, the stars of that famous court which held its state at many-towered Camelot, we read of Elaine, the lily maid, and of—

‘ Her bright hair blown about the serious face ;’

and in that exquisite picture of the voyage of the dead, when, in the barge palled all its length in blackest samite, she lies upon her bier, she comes before us :—

‘ In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter—*all her bright hair* streaming down.’

Enid, too, the wife of that stalwart Sir Geraint, belongs to the fair-haired band :—

‘ She lay  
With her fair head in the dim yellow light.’

But, fair-haired or dark-haired, our lady readers will desire to preserve their crowning beauty ; and it may console them to know that this is best done by frequent washing. The water should be tepid, the soap non-alkaline. After the hair has been thoroughly cleansed, it should be as thoroughly dried, and then well brushed (with a soft brush, not one of those bristle-machines which tear up one’s locks like a rake or harrow) in the sun or before a fire. A little simple pomade or perfumed oil may be rubbed well into the roots as a final stage of the process ; but let it be *a little*. What is more unpleasant to the sight or the smell than a mass of curls glistening with grease ? When Milton asks—

‘ Were it not better done as others use,  
To sport with Amaryll’s in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Neæra’s hair ?’

assuredly he does not contemplate that the said tangles shall be redolent of hair-oil ! Some hair is naturally so dry that it requires the occasional application of an unguent, but I repeat that the application should be very carefully regulated. As to the washes advertised for changing the colour of the hair, or for bringing hair, by some miraculous spell, on places absolutely devoid of it, I would say, *Anathema maranatha !* Either they are composed of materials positively noxious, or of materials totally incapable of producing the promised effect ; in the former case they are ruinous, in the latter useless. When the hair-germs or roots have once perished, no oil, wash, essence, extract, or pomade can restore them.

There is much good sense in the following remarks :—

‘The constant and persevering use of the brush is a great means of beautifying the hair, rendering it glossy and elastic, and encouraging a disposition to curl. The brush produces further advantages in propelling and calling into action the contents of the numerous vessels and pores which are interspersed over the whole surface of the head, and furnish vigour and nourishment to the hair. Five minutes at least, every morning and evening, should be devoted to its use. Two brushes are necessary for the toilette of the hair—a penetrating and a polishing brush; the penetrating brush, especially for a lady’s use, should be composed of strong elastic hairs cut into irregular lengths, but not so hard or coarse as to be in any danger of irritating the skin; after being passed once or twice through the hair, to ensure its smoothness and regularity, the brush should be slightly dipped in Eau de Cologne, or sprinkled with a little perfumed hartshorn, as either of these preparations is beneficial in strengthening the hair. The polishing brush should be made of fine, soft hairs, thickly studded. Combs should only be resorted to for the purpose of giving a form to the hair, or assisting in its decoration, as their use is more or less prejudicial to the surface of the skin and the roots of the hair.

‘The growth of the hair is best promoted by keeping it scrupulously clean, and by cutting it frequently.’

I believe it is also promoted by being largely exposed every day (weather permitting) to the action of the fresh free air out-of-doors, without any covering of hat, bonnet, or cap—of course for a moderate time, and not in excessive sunshine. Gipsies, fisherwomen, and others, whose occupations compel them to be much in the open air, almost invariably possess an abundance of hair, glossy, strong, and wavy.

To persons who cannot dispense with oil, or pomade, or wash, I may recommend the following preparations :

1. *For general purposes* :—Rowland’s ‘incomparable oil, Macassar,’ which still retains its deserved celebrity; Hopgood’s Nutritive Pomade, a really excellent compound; and the new Pomade Vaseline.

2. *For stimulating the growth of the hair* :

a. Castor oil, 2 oz.; oil of cantharides, 2 drachms  
rosemary, spirit of, 1 oz.

- b. Distilled vinegar, 2 oz. ; salt of tartar, 2 drachms ; spirit of lavender,  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. ; spirit of rosemary, 1 oz. ; spirit of nutmegs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. ; essence of oil of almonds, 1 drachm ; essence of violets, 1 drachm ; pure spring water, 20 oz.
- c. Olive oil and spirit of rosemary, 1 oz. each ; oil of nutmeg, 20 drops.
- d. Eau de Cologne, 2 oz. ; oil of lavender, 10 drops ; tincture of cantharides, 2 drachms.
- e. Otto of roses, 1 drachm ; oil of rosemary, 1 drachm ; olive oil, 1 quart.
- f.  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. lard, dissolve in a quart of boiling water ; when cold, pour off the water, well dry the lard, and beat it into a soft cream, to which add very gradually, still beating the mixture,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of castor oil, and 25 drops of essential oil of bergamot (or essence of violets).

3. *Curling Fluids*.—2 lbs. soap and 8 oz. potash ; dissolve each in a pint and half of water ; mix ; let the liquor settle, and, when cold, add 20 drops of essence of amber.

Take  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. good white soap, grate it finely, and put it with 6 oz. potash and 3 pints alcohol into a jar, which place in a hot-water bath ; stir until thoroughly melted, and allow the mixture to settle ; pour off the clear liquor ; scent with essence of violets, and bottle carefully for use.

I must touch lightly upon an unpleasant subject. Everybody knows how disagreeable a thing is bad breath ; there are some persons whom, for this reason, we avoid as we would avoid malaria. One of the old poets in his enumeration of the charms of his mistress places foremost among them her sweet breath, which had in it a perfume like that of roses and violets. Physiologically it is a matter of no small importance, as it is a sign of good health. Sufferers from bad breath should be careful in their diet, and regulate under medical advice the action of the digestive organs. The condition of the teeth should also receive constant attention. After meals, and, in the case of gentlemen, after smoking, or the use of alcoholic liquors, the mouth should be well rinsed with tepid water. A few drops of tincture of myrrh may be added to the water with advantage. When the vitiation of the breath is caused by the teeth, the

following compound may be recommended : Mix eight ounces of the best honey in two ounces of rose-water over a gentle fire for a few minutes, and then add sufficient Armenian bole and powdered myrrh to make a soft paste or cream. This is applied to the teeth with a brush two or three times a day.

But, as I have already said, health is the real sweetener of the breath ; and palliatives, after all, are of very slight advantage.

As to the eyes, these should be bathed night and morning in cold water. On no account should they be approached with lotions, or ointments, except under the supervision of an oculist, unless you wish to suffer from impaired eyesight in your prime of life. The sensitiveness of these organs is so excessive that they resent the slightest maltreatment. If the lids are inflamed by cold, or study, the only remedy I dare advise is a little rose-water. It is fortunate, perhaps, that the colour of the eyes is unchangeable, or we should certainly have quack preparations as there are for the hair, with the result of inducing premature blindness. As it is, some persons are foolish—or mad—enough to stimulate their brilliancy by the application of belladonna, to the certain injury of their organisation ; and the Eastern custom of darkening the inside of the eyelids and eyelashes with powdered Kohol is not unknown, I am sorry to say, in England. Moore, in his *Lalla Rookh*, represents the ladies of the Harem, in the performance of the various operations of their toilette, as mixing :

‘The Kohol’s jetty dye,  
To give that long, dark languish to the eye,  
Which makes the maids, whom kings are proud to cull  
From fair Circassia’s vales, so beautiful.’

And Shaw, in his travels, tells us that none of these ladies take themselves to be completely dressed, till they have tinged the hair and edges of their eyelids with the powder of lead-ore. He adds : ‘As this operation is performed by dipping first into the powder a small wooden bodkin of the thickness of a quill, and then drawing it afterwards through the eyelids over the ball of the eye, we shall have a lively image of what the Prophet (Jerem. iv. 30) may be supposed to mean by *rending the eyes with painting*. This practice is no doubt of great antiquity ; for, besides the instance already taken notice of, we find that where Jezebel is said (2 Kings ix. 30) *to have painted*

*her face, the original words are, she adjusted her eyes with the powder of lead-ore.'*

The antiquity of an abuse is often, in England, a reason for its continued existence ; but let it not be so with the practice of staining or painting the eyelashes. If you want lustre to your eyes, keep early hours ; take regular exercise ; live moderately ; use cold water plentifully ; and do not read or write by gaslight.

Early to bed and early to rise . . .

That is the way to brighten your eyes !

After all, the only really useful appliances of the toilette are good soap and cold water ; and the only safe preservatives of a healthy frame and general comeliness are exercise and diet. Further, in our dress, or the arrangement of our hair, or in our various devices for securing an attractive personal appearance, we must never attempt to be other than we are : blondes must not affect to be brunettes, short men and stout must not aspire to imitate the Anaks of mankind, and age must make no pretence to the graces and gifts of youth.

Every lady, and for that matter every gentleman, likes to see a white hand ; but here, again, no preparations are needed if the bodily health be duly cared for, personal cleanliness sedulously observed, and the hands screened from excessive exposure to the sun. But the reader must distinguish between a wholesome whiteness and purity, and that artificial whiteness which absolutely offends by its excess. All that is not natural must be and is offensive. Who would not rather see the healthy skin wearing its natural tint, and laced by its azure veins, than that dull pallor produced by the application of all kinds of chemical compounds ? What lover but would rather clasp his lady-love's hands when fresh and cool with the tint of health, than after they have been plastered with some empirical cream or soaked in some noxious wash ? To keep the hands soft and healthily white, nothing more is required than sufficient washing in cold or tepid water, *with fine soap*. If discoloured or tanned by accidental causes, a little almond-paste may be sparingly used, or, better still, a simple mixture of lemon-juice and milk. Anything else or more cannot be too strongly censured.

The nails should be kept moderately long, and gently rounded. The skin should not be allowed to encroach at



their base ; and they should be cleansed frequently with a proper brush and soap and water. To refer again to the ladies of the Harem : we learn that

‘ Some bring leaves of Henna, to imbue  
The fingers’ ends with a bright roseate hue,  
So bright, that in the mirror’s depth they seem  
Like tips of coral branches in the stream ;’

but the bright roseate hue of Nature is infinitely to be preferred. Beauty, when unadorned, is adorned the most ; is, indeed, *only* beauty when it dispenses with the meretricious aids of what is not art but imposture. Eyes brightened by belladonna ; cheeks reddened by rouge ; neck and shoulders whitened with pearl-powder ; hands dipped in amandine—the picture is revolting ! A creature thus made up is no true woman, and cannot command our respect, much less our love. We turn, with grave dissatisfaction, from the Belinda of the poet :

‘ And now, unveil’d, the toilet stands display’d,  
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.  
First, rob’d in white, the nymph intent adores,  
With head uncover’d, the cosmetic powers.  
A heaving image in the glass appears,  
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears ;  
Th’ inferior priestess, at her altar’s side,  
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.  
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here  
The various offerings of the world appear ;  
From each she nicely culls with anxious toil,  
And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.  
This casket India’s glowing gems unlocks,  
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.  
The tortoise here and elephant unite,  
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white.  
Here piles of pins extend their shining rows,  
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.  
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms ;  
The fair each moment rises in her charms,  
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,  
And calls forth all the wonders of her face ;  
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,  
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.’

From this painted and repaired Belinda, this thing of puffs and patches and powder, with her made-up blush and artificial ‘lightnings,’ we turn with disgust. Such is not the woman whom

we can love as mother or wife ; such is not the woman we could wish our sister to be.

Not that man or woman must be allowed to elevate into a virtue the neglect of his or her personal appearance. The toilet, in its place and within certain limits, is rightly an object of attention. There is no modesty in a wan complexion ; no moral excellence in a rough brown hand and nails edged with black ; no genius in ill-kempt hair. He who does not keep his nails clean is no gentleman. She who assails one with breath scarcely less full-flavoured than that of the dragon in the old story, is no lady. The body in its way is as deserving of 'culture' as the mind ; and to neglect it is a sign of an ignorance of its wonderful organisation. Besides, that neglect carries with it certain penalties which are always troublesome and painful, and may possibly be very serious. Neglect of the eyes means impaired sight, perhaps blindness ; neglect of the teeth, impaired digestion, the agonies of tooth-ache, perhaps early toothlessness. You cannot be unmindful of the law of cleanliness without inducing disease.

That a due attention to the body has its reward we see in the case of the feet, which, if properly shod, will not torment their owners with corns or bunions. Tight boots are for this reason to be avoided ; moreover, they spoil the shape of the foot, and impede circulation. You are not required to encase your 'pedal extremities' in boots or shoes a world too wide ; but they should be large enough to permit of free muscular action. I like to see a small foot—small as those of which we read in Suckling's ballad—

' Her feet beneath her petticoat,  
Like little mice stole in and out,—

but I would rather see a large foot than one unnaturally cribbed, cabined, and confined in a leather prison, so that the toes are huddled up together like luggage in a railway-van, and project like so many promontories. A graceful walk—easy, undulating, vigorous—is an accomplishment which no pretty woman can dispense with ; but this is impossible unless the feet and ankles are allowed the utmost liberty of motion. Compare the elastic step of a Highland maiden across her native heather with that of some of the so-called belles of London Society, whose walk is something between a totter and a run, or is made up of a succession of jerks, which dis-

organise (so to speak) the lines of the whole figure. Which is the more pleasing to the eye? I would not underrate the value of a finely-formed foot and ankle, but I am sure those coveted charms are not to be acquired by any amount of compression and contraction. As a matter of fact, they are natural gifts, and people who have large feet and thick ankles must put up with the inconvenience. By wearing dark-coloured stockings and good shoes they may materially disguise their disadvantages; they cannot get rid of them. On the other hand, the injudicious treatment of the feet in early life often leads to deformity; for vigorous walking exercise is absolutely necessary to preserve the fine arch of the instep and the curving outline of the ankle. Let me note, in passing from this subject, that a small foot is not necessarily a pretty foot; smallness, indeed, may become a deformity—no one would call the small feet of the Chinese women beautiful; and what is rather to be sought for is harmony of proportions. Study the feet of the Venus of Milo, and you will arrive at a correct idea of what constitutes beauty in this part of the human frame.

By an easy transition I pass from the foot to the great subject of exercise, the benefits of which, to those whose social condition obviates the necessity of continuous physical exertion as a means of gaining a livelihood, cannot be over-estimated. A certain amount of bodily fatigue must be undergone if our natural strength is to be maintained, and our muscles and organs are to be preserved in healthy vigour. In this way the circulation is equalised, and the blood more effectually distributed through every part. Cold feet or hands, or a feeling of chill, warn us that the circulation is languid and impeded. During exercise the muscles press on the veins, and, by quickening the vessels into activity, promote the regular movement of the currents. The valves of the heart are relieved of unnecessary or injurious labour, and assisted in their work of sending onward the stream of life. When exercise is neglected, the blood collects too much about this central region, and we become sensible of an oppression, a difficulty of breathing, cardiac uneasiness, lowness of spirits, and a general heaviness and anxiety. We often find persons complaining that they are too weak and too breathless to take exercise. Allow me to assure you, my dear reader, that you are labouring under a

delusion ; your weakness, your quick and short respiration, arise from *want* of exercise ! The heart groans under its burden, and yet you do nothing to help it, to impel the blood forward to the extremities. The lungs are similarly oppressed, but you refuse to relieve them from their trouble. Be certain that the less exercise you take, the less will you be fitted for, and yet the more you will need it. Your muscles will grow flaccid, your nerves disordered, your blood thick and slow. You are committing suicide, and deserve to suffer all the penalties attaching to such perversity.

Of all forms of exercise, walking is the best, because it acts on the whole body, and acts evenly. It relieves brain and heart and lungs, strengthens both the muscular and the nervous system, freshens the mind, invigorates the spirits. It is the best of doctors, for its sanitary influence is moral as well as physical. The man who walks, lives. He can use his eyes freely, and store his memory with facts, images, and associations. He is his own master—can stop when and where he pleases—is monarch of all he surveys ; the flowers are his, and the blue skies above him, and the music of the birds, and the freshness of the breeze. ‘Walk,’ says Charles Dickens, and no one knew better the value of the advice he gave—‘walk and be happy, walk and be healthy.’ ‘The best of all ways to lengthen our days,’ is not, as Mr. Thomas Moore has it, ‘to steal a few hours from night, my love,’ but, with leave be it spoken, to walk steadily and with a purpose. The present writer knows of certain ancients, far gone in years, who have staved off infirmities and dissolution by earnest walking—hale fellows close upon eighty and ninety, but brisk as boys. As sings the Queen Anne poet, more sensibly than melodiously :—

‘Toil and be strong ; by toil the flaccid nerves  
Grow firm, and gain a more compacted tone ;  
The greener juices are by toil subdued,  
Mellowed and subtilized ; the vapid old  
Expelled, and all the rancour of the blood.’

Everybody should be in the open air at least two hours daily, and if in ordinary health should walk at least four to six miles daily—not a dull, rigid, constitutional walk, but a brisk, joyous, exhilarating walk, and, if possible, a walk *with an object*. It might be considered vulgar to perspire ; but certainly you should adopt a degree of speed sufficient to bring a moisture on the skin and

a glow to the cheek. Be it understood that 'shopping'—I speak to the ladies—is not *walking*; nor—I speak to the gentlemen—is 'sauntering'; I mean that listless pacing up and down the park, a certain fashionable strut, which our 'gilded youth' so greatly affect. You must use activity enough to send the blood faster through the veins and to quicken the action of the liver. But you must stop short of actual fatigue. Exercise should be so regulated as to strengthen and stimulate; it becomes injurious when it worries or depresses.

So far, I have been addressing the younger members of society. As to adults, or rather men advanced in years, I will quote what Dr. Ralfe says: The plea offered by most men of middle age for not taking regular and systematic exercise is the want of time and opportunity. We believe this plea to be utterly groundless. A brisk walk of three quarters of an hour before the business of the day, and half an hour at the end of the day, with a good stroll on Sunday afternoons some distance out of town, would be sufficient in most cases; while this brief curtailment of business hours might be met by an earlier hour of rising and retiring to rest. The men who most frequently urge this plea of want of time, seem to find no difficulty in spending an hour or two before dinner at their club, in whist, in billiards, or in the smoking-room; and when taxed with this, and urged to employ this part of the day in a 'constitutional' round the park, plead the sense of fatigue and weariness induced by the labours of the day, forgetting that this sense of weariness is only subjective, and speedily disappears after a few minutes of brisk exercise.

There are open to ladies other forms of exercise besides walking, and these are not to be neglected, though I decline to look upon any of them as a satisfactory substitute for it. Some of them may be accepted as supplementary, such, for instance, as rowing and swimming—both being pastimes in which ladies can now indulge freely without fear of provoking censure or gaining notoriety. Croquet is not so fashionable as it was; but lawn tennis has taken its place, and is, perhaps, more beneficial. Dancing must not be omitted; though, as pursued in London ball-rooms, it does not exercise an exactly sanitary influence. The good done by the play of muscle and limb is probably more than neutralised by excitement and the respiration for some hours of an unwholesome atmosphere.



There can be no doubt, however, that it promotes a graceful carriage and an ease and litheness of motion, converting many a lubberly youth into a polished and elegant cavalier, and many an awkward lass into a refined young maiden, whose bearing and movements please by their facility and self-possession. Says Jean Paul Richter, in his *Levana*; 'Women, it is well known, cannot run, but only dance; and every woman would more easily reach by dancing than by running a post-house, to which, instead of a straight poplar alley, a lordly row of trees, planted in the English fashion, conducted. The gymnastics of running, walking on stilts, climbing, and the like, steels and hardens individual powers and muscles; whereas dancing, like a corporeal poetry, embellishes, exercises, and equalises all the muscles. Further, the harmony connected with it imparts to the mind and affections that metrical order which reveals the highest, and regulates the beat of the pulse, the step, and even the thoughts. Music is the metre of this poetic movement, and is an invisible dance, just as dancing is a silent music. Finally, it must also be ranked among the advantages of this eye-and-heel pleasure, that the young with the young, by no harder canon than the musical, light as sound, may be joined in a rose-bud feast without thorns or strife.'

This, the poetical aspect of dancing, as distinguished from the physiological, finds expression also in a poem by Schiller, from which I quote the introductory lines:

'See how like lightest waves at play, the airy dancers fleet;  
And scarcely feels the floor the wings of those harmonious feet.  
Oh, are they flying shadows from their native forms set free?  
Or phantoms in the fairy ring that summer moonbeams see?  
As, by the gentle zephyr blown, some light mist flees in air;  
As skiffs that skim adown the tide, when silver waves are fair,  
So sports the docile footstep to the heave of that sweet measure,  
As music wafts the form aloft at its melodious pleasure.'

Riding is also one of the amusements which women share with men; in which, if they do not carry off the palm, they contend for it upon equal terms. Whether for man or woman, it is a noble exercise, and its therapeutic effects must be frankly recognized. Dr. C. Smith has carefully studied the increase in the quantity of air inspired that takes place in a variety of movements. Taking the recumbent position to represent unity = 1, then, in standing, the quantity of air inspired rises to 1.33; in walking at the rate of one mile an hour, 1.9; at

four miles an hour, 5. Riding and trotting raises it to 4.05, and swimming to 4.33. Along with this increased respiratory action will be an increase in the number of respirations ; that is, in the number of alternate acts of expansion and contraction of the chest. In a healthy adult these average from fourteen to eighteen a minute, but with exercise they are greatly increased, so that they often, in riding at racing speed, exceed forty a minute. But the more quickly the movements of respiration take place, the smaller is the proportionate quantity of carbonic acid contained in each volume of the expired air. Thus, if we take six respirations a minute, the quantity of carbonic acid is about 5.5 per cent. ; with twelve respirations, it is 4.2 ; with twenty-four, 3.3 ; with forty-eight, 2.9. Although the *proportionate* amount of carbonic acid exhaled out is thus decreased, yet the *absolute* quantity exhaled into the air in a given time is increased, owing to the larger quantity of air breathed in the time.

On the whole, then, riding is a less healthy exercise than walking ; but when not pursued to an excess it is invigorating and exhilarating, while its action upon the liver is well-known to be highly beneficial. Young ladies, condemned to a town life for several months in the year, and forced by the artificial conditions of society to breathe a comparatively impure atmosphere for several hours daily, will find a daily ride an admirable therapeutic agent—especially if instead of cantering round Rotten Row, they would hark away to Putney Heath and Wimbledon, and enjoy a brisk run over the breezy commons.

Riding cannot be taught by book, and I have neither the time nor the pretension to act as a teacher. But there is a kind of etiquette connected with it, which in these pages obviously must not be ignored. Whether in town or country, horseman or horsewoman must dress suitably ; the former in a plain cut-away coat, with tight close-fitting trousers, and neat boots ; the latter in trim habit, with full but not too long skirt, hat and feather, white collar, and gauntlet gloves. The round ‘stove-pipe’ hat is now seldom worn ; in its place is donned a felt or straw hat : but on this point, and on the details of the skirt and habit, the reader should consult a tailor of good repute. The fashion of this world changes ; and that which is the mode in Rotten Row to-day, to-morrow may excite inextinguishable laughter as a fossilised survival.

In the quiet green lanes of rural England, a young lady may ride out unaccompanied ; but in town she must be attended by a gentleman (not too young) and her groom. But a gentleman rarely requires a groom, unless he is going to escort a bevy of fair horsewomen.

A lady will need assistance in mounting. 'There never was so lame a legend,' says a vivacious writer, 'as that of a certain lady of Coventry, whom Tennyson and Thomas the Inquisitive have rendered celebrated. Of course it is very pretty, and we who honour women as we should (though we burnt *la Pucelle d'Orléans*), and have had a range of noble ones from Boadicea to Florence Nightingale, can well believe that Godiva was as modest as she was merciful ; but have we ever asked—*who assisted her* ? Perhaps you will tell me that till a very recent period, no stable-yard was without a flight of three stone-steps standing by themselves, and that women always mounted from them. I know it, and have seen hundreds of them in the western counties, but before I admit your argument, you must show me that these steps existed in the days of the fair equestrian who wore no garb but modesty ; you must prove that these people are wrong who describe the ladies of the olden time as mounting from the shoulder of a serving-man or gallant.'

Ladies of the present day, however, are contented with the hand of their cavaliers. The fair horsewoman, having gathered up her skirt in her left hand, stands close to her steed, with her face towards his head, and her right hand on the pommel of the saddle. She intimates by a little gesture that you are at liberty to aid her ; whereupon you put yourself at the horse's shoulder, with your face towards the lady, and gently kneeling, extend your right hand at a suitable distance from the ground. Into its palm slides the lady's dainty left foot, and immediately, as she lifts herself up, you raise the foot gradually and carefully, and she seats herself in her saddle. That is 'how it is done' ; but I advise you not to trust to verbal description : watch the action of some experienced cavalier, and watch it carefully, lest when first you 'assist a fair equestrian,' you cover yourself with shame and bring her to grief.

Hunting is an 'amusement' still popular in England ; some of our legislators seem to think that without it England would not be worth living in ; but I confess that for myself I never

could see the 'fun of it.' To gallop headlong over fence and ditch after the merry brown hare or a frightened fox seems to me scarcely the kind of 'sport' for the sons of the men of Agincourt and the Armada. Deer-stalking is many degrees higher in merit; yachting has sense and purpose in it, when not confined to racing for silver cups; cricket requires infinitely more skill and endurance. However, hunting has its devotees and its defenders—witness Mr. Anthony Trollope, who on this subject crossed swords with Mr. Charles Reade; and in English literature it figures largely—witness the novels of Fielding, Lever, Trollope, Charlie Clarke, Whyte Melville, and the songs of Egerton Warburton. I cannot deal with it here; the field is too wide; and only an expert could do it justice. But I may hint that the hunting-field, like the cricket-ground, is a place in which the gentleman stands strongly contrasted with the snob. The gentleman does not ride like a jockey or a tailor; does not ruthlessly cannon against ladies; does not relieve his feelings at the expense of the ears of his companions; does not indulge in Munchausenisms about the day's doings—or rather *his* day's doings—over the walnuts and the wine.

But I am digressing. The great theme which I ought to keep before me is exercise, and I have now indicated some of its principal forms—walking, dancing, riding, swimming, hunting. It is easy to extend the list. Let us, for example, arrange the forms in three distinct classes, basing the division upon definite physiological considerations:

1. *Exercises which employ almost equally all the muscles of the body:* Boxing, climbing, fencing, swimming.
2. *Exercises which give considerable employment to the upper as well as the lower extremity:* Cricket, football, golf (a capital pastime for ladies—it may be called walking, with sport in it), fives, rackets, rowing, shooting, tennis.
3. *Exercises chiefly performed by the lower limbs and trunk, the muscles of the upper extremity being auxiliary:* Leaping, riding, running, walking.

I have already said that, all things considered, walking must be adjudged the healthiest and pleasantest form of regular exercise; but as it is clear that no natural variety of exercise does in itself call equally into play the muscles of the whole

body, the reader must *vary* his or her exercises—in a word, must do what a *bon vivant* will never do with his wines, that is, *mix them*.

Connected with each of these varieties is what I may term an unwritten law of etiquette, which it would not be easy to define here, even if I had the space, and, in truth, it will best be learnt from observation of the usages of good society. At the bottom of it lies that fundamental principle which, as I have so often urged, underlies all courtesy, all the traditions of politeness, all the requirements of manners, the principle of disregard of self. Your first thought must be for your neighbour; your last for yourself. Of your neighbour you must never take advantage; you must never impose upon him a duty which you yourself have evaded; you must never betray him into a false position; you must never aim at him your ridicule. And especially must this primary principle find application in your conversation and communication with the ladies, so that you may be known of all as a nineteenth century Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*. Place their convenience, their comfort, their ease, their satisfaction, before all other objects; these attained, all objects will seem to have been attained; to such an extent is etiquette the ways and means by which modern chivalry protects, defends, assists, and honours the 'fair sex.'

In speaking, as I have hitherto done, of exercise and recreation, it must not be thought that I am insensible of the advantage or the duty of culture. All work and no play is said to make Jack a dull boy; but all play and no work will make him incurably duller. Both Jack and Jill must so regulate their time as to allow room for study as well as pastime, for the cultivation of the mind as well as for the ease of the body. This may be recommended even from the low standpoint of the stickler for etiquette; inasmuch as it is certain that good manners come more easily to individuals softened and refined by intellectual pursuits. The prejudice which exists against good or fashionable society, and the ridicule showered upon it, are due to the fact that its leaders too often are distinguished by their ignorance of all those higher questions and subjects which engage the attention of thoughtful minds. Hence the vapid character of their conversation; hence the importance they ascribe to trifles. It is difficult not to condemn,



and yet it were wiser to pity, those unfortunate persons who prefer the investigation of a *menu* to the study of Shakespeare, and inspect the coloured extravagances of a book of fashion with more pleasure than the finest works of the greatest masters. There are others who acquire a certain degree of familiarity with the piano or palette; who can sing Italian bravuras, and paint impossible landscapes; who style themselves and are styled by their friends 'accomplished,' and yet they have no knowledge of the literature of their own country! There are men who ride well to hounds and can make a good bag on the moors, or who shine with brilliancy in the dance, and are assiduous in their patronage of the drama, who are virtually without an idea on any of those great questions which concern the present well-being and future happiness of humanity. They waste their lives upon small objects. Of no such person would I speak as a 'lady,' or a 'gentleman,' whatever his or her social position, or material advantages.

'What fact more conspicuous in modern history,' says Emerson, 'than the creation of the gentleman? Chivalry is that, and loyalty is that, and in English literature, half the drama, and all the novels, from Sir Philip Sidney to Sir Walter Scott, paint this figure. The word *gentleman*, which, like the word *Christian*, must hereafter characterise the present and the few preceding centuries, by the importance attached to it, is a homage to personal and incommunicable properties. Frivolous and fantastic additions have got associated with the name, but the steady interest of mankind in it must be attributed to the valuable properties which it designates. An element which unites all the most forcible persons of every country; makes them intelligible and agreeable to each other, and is somewhat so precise, that it is at once felt if an individual lack the masonic sign, cannot be any casual product, but must be an average result of the character and faculties universally found in man. It seems a certain permanent average; as the atmosphere is a permanent composition, while so many gases are combined only to be decomposed. *Comme il faut*, is the Frenchman's description of good society, *as we must be*. It is a spontaneous fruit of talents and feelings of precisely the class who have most vigour, who take the lead in the world of this hour, and though far from pure, far from constituting the gladdest and highest tone of human feeling, is as good as the

whole society permits it to be. It is made of the spirit more than of the talent of men, and is a compound result into which every great force enters as an ingredient, namely, virtue, wit, beauty, wealth, and power.'

Without cultivated intelligence, you may become a milliner's or a tailor's block, or lay-figure, but really a gentleman you cannot be. The leaders of fashion, such as Lady Holland, Lady Palmerston, the Countess Waldegrave, have always been women of considerable capacity, matured by study, experience, and reflection. Devote, therefore, a portion of your time to the continual education of your taste and judgment; let there be an hour for close and careful reading, as well as hours for the pursuit of the so-called accomplishments, though music and drawing, rightly studied, develop into something much more than accomplishments—into intellectual forces. The lady, or the gentleman, is separated from 'the common herd' (I do not use the term offensively) by the keenness of her or his perceptions, and this keenness is wrought and preserved by careful mental and moral culture. If there be any delusion of which it is specially needful to disabuse the mind, it is that old and obstinate delusion that adventitious conditions, such as rank and wealth, and social prestige, make the gentleman. It is in himself that he is thus and thus. It is in his own mind, his own heart, that the charm, the magic, really lies. Education begins him; good company helps to make him; but it is reflection and reading that complete him. Only of such a one may we use the words of the old dramatist:

'He is a noble gentleman: withal  
Happy in 's endeavours: the general voice  
Sounds him for courtesy, behaviour, language,  
And every fair demeanour an example:  
Titles of honour add not to his worth,  
Who is himself an honour to his title.'

But even this is not all. Refined taste, matured faculties, a happy judgment, the power of saying the right thing at the right time, a knowledge of literature, an insight into the principles of art, some familiarity with the processes of science—all these may co-exist along with fine manners and grace of bearing; and yet the result shall not be a perfect 'lady,' or perfect 'gentleman.' These are words which must not be carelessly applied. Who shall say that the highest standard of character

has been reached, so long as the moral faculties are 'below par'? We want the educated mind; we want the polished address; we want the conversational charm; but we also want a deep true sense of honour, of truthfulness, of sincerity. We want something of that acknowledgment of the higher, purer nature which led Dekker, the old dramatist, to speak of our Lord as 'the truest gentleman that ever breathed.' We want an indignant scorn of a mean action; an intense sympathy—translating itself into action—with meekness and poverty. I feel nothing but contempt for the etiquette which rises superior to moral considerations. I can regard only with disgust the supposititious gentleman who is a gentleman only on the surface, and seeks to impose upon us with electroplated gentility. Man or woman, if thou wouldst claim the noble title—highest, I take it, of all earthly distinctions—of lady or gentleman, first must

‘Thy actions to thy words accord; thy words  
To thy large heart give utterance due; thy heart  
Contain of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.’

Be generous, be a gentleman; that is, be equitable, refined, genial; just in the interpretation of motives; prompt to forbear and forgive; patient, humane, tender, courteous. If thou dost seek to realise the loftiest excellences of the Christian character, and humbly strivest to imitate the Master's charity, patience, endurance, and self-sacrifice, then shall it be said of thee as Tennyson has said of his friend, Arthur Hallam:—

‘He seemed the thing he was, and joined  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind;  
‘And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman!’

After day comes night; after sunshine, cloud; and he who wears the wedding-garb to-day may be called upon to assume the mourner's raiment to-morrow. In these pages, however, I will not touch, ever so lightly, on the sadness and sorrow of the death-chamber; *there* let Feeling have its way, and bid Etiquette wait without. But after the last offices of respect and affection have been paid to the dead, the mourners mingle again in Society, and Society will then claim its due. The iron

law of custom seizes them in its grasp, and they find themselves bound and fettered by certain recognised conventionalities. 'The question,' says an authority, 'as to how soon persons in mourning should or should not re-enter Society is in some measure an open one. Although, as regards very near relatives, the regulation period of seclusion is rigidly adhered to, yet, in the case of more distant relatives, this rule is greatly modified and governed by individual feeling, although any marked breach of the etiquette usually observed by persons in mourning would naturally provoke unfavourable comment.'

Court mourning is regulated by the Lord Chamberlain, whose orders are duly notified in the *London Gazette*. It is imperative only on persons connected with the Court, State officials, and persons attending drawing-rooms, levees, State balls, State concerts, and the like. General mourning is ordered on the death of any member of the Royal Family, but there is no means of enforcing it upon the public.

Persons who have sustained a bereavement leave their cards on their friends and acquaintances as soon as they feel able to re-enter Society. When cards of inquiry have been left (with the words 'to inquire' written on the right-hand corner of the visiting-card), it is usual to return them by cards with 'Thanks for kind inquiries' written upon them; if no such cards of inquiry have been left, the usual visiting-cards will suffice. The usual period of seclusion for a widow is twelve months, but she continues to wear mourning for another year. Widowers also wear mourning for two years, but business and other causes compel them to return to society after a very brief privacy.

Individual affection governs, to some extent, the mourning of children for parents, or parents for children; it is also very frequently affected by irresistible circumstances; so that, while the period may be extended to eighteen months, it may also be shortened to twelve or even six months. A parent or child who has suffered bereavement would not reappear in society in less than three months.

For a grandfather or grandmother we seclude ourselves for about two months, and wear mourning for nine months. Brothers and sisters retire for two months, and wear the 'garb of woe' for six months. For an aunt or uncle, society would be forborne for two or three weeks, and mourning worn for three months. No seclusion is expected after the deaths of a

nephew (or niece), a first cousin, and a second cousin; but mourning is *de rigueur* in good society for three months in the first case, six weeks in the second, and three weeks in the third.

During the *last third* of the period above mentioned, half-mourning will be worn. Thus, a widow will wear full mourning for sixteen months, and half mourning for eight months.

When the head of a family is taken away, it is customary to put the servants in mourning; and this is also done, in many cases, on the death of a son or daughter.

Funeral-cards are not now sent on the death of a relative. Friends and relatives very frequently leave or send wreaths of *immortelles* or of white flowers to a house of mourning a day or two before that appointed for the funeral.

Many old funeral or mourning customs have recently dropped into abeyance; and as all tended to deepen and confine the gloom of an event which, from a Christian point of view, should not be regarded with other than feelings of hope, love, and peace, we may expect they will not be revived. There is still much to be done in the way of funeral reform; the passage of the body to its last resting-place is still invested with too much pomp of melancholy and ostentation of grief. But of late years it cannot be denied that a wiser and more truly devout spirit has prevailed, and the hearse and its nodding plumes, the hired mourners, and all the ghastly 'pageantry of death,' are rapidly giving place to more cheerful appurtenances.







## CHAPTER XI.

### TWO CENTURIES OF MAXIMS UPON MANNERS.

‘Manners (*mores*) or merit makyth man.’

WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM.

Introductions—Letters of Introduction—Introductions to Ladies—Introductions at Dinners and at Morning Calls—Bowing and Hand-shaking—Good Manners a Rare Gift—Their Popularity—Morning Calls—Whom to Congratulate—Exclusiveness of Married Life—Cards not to be Sent by Post—Precedence—Punctuality—Etiquette of Dinners—Adaptability—Use of Knives, Forks, and Spoons—Covers—Moderation in Wine—Grace—Proper Distribution of Wines—Limitations of Smoking—Dressing Well—Hats, Boots, and Gloves—Harmony of Colours—Listening to Music—Singing—Forgetfulness of Self—Douglas Jerrold on Etiquette—Gentility a Mental Quality—Stillingsfleet on Politeness—How to Dance—Peace in the Ballroom—Favourite Dances—Conduct in Intervals of Dancing—Invitations to Balls—Reception of Guests—Royal Guests—Duty of Dancing—Supper—Gratuities—State Balls—Ethics of Good Manners—Stiffness—Compliments—Proportion in Expenditure and in Gifts—Wit—Good Temper—Ostentation—Attention to *Fiancées* and to Brides—Cockades—Driving with Ladies—Friendships—Slang—Silence is Golden—Calls—Correspondence—Monograms and Crests—Chaperones and their Duties—Dispensing with Ceremony—Reality—Favours—Conviction of Mistakes—Equality of Guests—Colonel Hanger—Gossip—Secrets—Intrusion of Infirmities—Conversation—Speaking of One’s Self and of Others—Discretion and Agreeableness of Speech—Selection of Topics and Treatment—Self-respect—Servility—Science of ‘Bowing’—Rules of the Road—Entering a Room—Arrogance—Self-consciousness.



IN addition to, and by way of, summing-up and condensing, the system of good manners which I have endeavoured to expound in the foregoing chapters, I add the following ‘aphoristic utterances,’ cast in a form which will assist the memory :

1. Never make introductions unless you have good reason to believe that both parties are agreeable.

2. If you meet an acquaintance while you are walking with a friend, do not introduce them.

3. If you pass an acquaintance with a lady on his arm, do not nod : take off your hat, so that your salute may seem to embrace both your friend and the lady.

4. Always present the person of lower rank to the person of higher ; a gentleman to a lady ; the young to the old.

5. An adherence to etiquette is a mark of respect ; if a man be worth knowing, he is surely worth the trouble of approaching properly. It will likewise relieve you from the awkwardness of being acquainted with people of whom you might at times be ashamed, or be obliged under any circumstances to 'cut.'

6. Don't 'cut' anybody ; that is, take care not to know anybody whom you will be obliged to 'cut.'

7. A rudeness is worse than a crime ; it is a blunder, because it is so easy to be polite.

8. The last injury which a man forgives is a wrong to his *amour propre*.

9. Never give letters of introduction unless you are prepared to be responsible for the persons to whom they are given. Why should you thrust upon the society of a friend those whom you would not admit to your own ? Or why ask his good services for individuals whom you do not know to deserve them ?

10. The holder of a letter of introduction should not take it in person, but should send it with his card of address. The receiver, if he be a gentleman, will call upon you without delay. At all events, you are bound to give him an option ; whereas, by taking your letter in person, you force yourself upon him whether he will or not.

11. This, however, does not apply to a letter of business, which you will take in person, and take at once. No business is well done that is done through any other agency than your own.

12. Remember that *littera scripta manet*, and write your letter of introduction accordingly.

13. Never *seal* a letter of introduction. The bearer ought to know on what terms he is to approach a stranger.

14. 'Letters which are warmly sealed,' says Jean Paul Richter, 'are often coldly opened.' When writing, remember the character of the person you are addressing, and don't waste your sweetness upon desert air.

15. Be specially careful in making introductions to ladies. It is an insult to the whole sex if you present to a lady any person of doubtful reputation.

16. When you are introduced to a lady, wait for her to offer her hand. If she do not do so, content yourself with a bow.

17. At dinner-parties general introductions are unnecessary ; though it is to be assumed that you would not seat at the same table persons whom you would not wish to know each other. In sending your guests down to dinner, you must of course introduce the lady to her destined partner, if they happen to be unacquainted.

18. In this case you do not ask the lady's permission.

19. At morning calls, if the callers arrive at the same time, the hostess will introduce them to each other, unless she has good grounds for believing that the introduction would be disagreeable or unsuitable.

20. At 'five o'clock teas,' and similar receptions, the hostess must introduce her principal guests to each other, but in doing so she must exercise a due discretion, and *assort* her guests with all possible discrimination.

21. In bowing to a lady in the street, lift your hat right off your head. Don't allow her to suppose that you wear a wig, and are afraid to disarrange it.

22. Hand-shaking is not admissible in a ball room.

23. A young lady may give her hand to a stranger, but will not shake *his*.

24. Observation which, with extensive view, surveys mankind from China to Peru, shows that in the country gentlemen do not offer their arm to ladies ; but in large towns this should be done as a measure of protection, and a token of respect.

25. In railway travelling, do not address a lady who is unknown to you unless she invite it. You may offer her your newspaper, with a silent bow. An 'unprotected' lady ought to call forth a gentleman's finest chivalry.

26. If you have made some slight acquaintance with a lady in a railway carriage, you must not presume upon that to bow or speak to her at any accidental *rencontre*, unless she make the first advances.

27. 'What a rare gift,' says Bulwer Lytton, 'is that of manners ! how difficult to define—how much more difficult to impart ! Better for a man to pursue them than wealth, beauty,

or even talent, if it fall short of genius—they will more than supply all. He who enjoys their advantages in the highest degree—viz., he who can please, penetrate, persuade, as the object may require, possesses the subtlest secret of the diplomatist and the statesman, and wants nothing but bent and opportunity to become “great!”

28. A man may not become ‘great’ by attention to all maxims upon manners, but he will become ‘popular,’ which is better.

29. ‘There is no policy like politeness ; and a good manner is the best thing in the world, either to get one a good name or to supply the want of it.’

30. In making calls, do your best to lighten the infliction to your hostess. Do not stay long ; and do not enter upon a subject of conversation which may terrify her with the apprehension that you intend to remain until you have exhausted it.

31. Carry your hat and cane (but not your umbrella, especially if it be rain-soaked and dirty) into the drawing-room, as a visible and outward sign of your intention to leave quickly.

32. In calling on a newly-married couple, do not congratulate *the lady* upon her marriage, but *the bridegroom*. He, of course, is fortunate in having found anyone to accept him ; *her* good luck may be more problematical.

33. A visit to a newly-married couple is not a *visit of condolence*. Be brisk in your manner, therefore ; wear a smile on your lip ; and if there be a feeling of pity at your heart, do your utmost to prevent its outward manifestation !

34. If you are an acquaintance of the husband, and not of the wife, you will not call, unless he has, by sending his own and his wife’s card, or by letter, intimated his wish that your friendship should continue. When a man marries, it is understood that he bids adieu at the church-door to the companions of his bachelorhood.

35. A married man is bound to consult his wife’s tastes, and his visiting-list will probably require considerable purging before it can be acceptable to her.

36. It has been well said that a newly-married couple may wish to limit the circle of their friends, from laudable motives of economy. ‘When a man first “sets up” in the world, the burthen of an extensive and indiscriminate acquaintance may be felt in various ways. Many have had cause to regret the

weakness of mind which allowed them to plunge into a vortex of gaiety and expense they could ill afford, from which they have found it difficult to extricate themselves, and the efforts of which have proved a serious evil to them in after life.'

37. A married lady when she makes a call will leave her husband's card.

38. Persons sometimes send cards by their servants to return visits; but this should not be done, except when it is to acknowledge 'kind inquiries.' You pay yourself a poor compliment if you think a piece of pasteboard a sufficient representative!

39. *Homage aux dames!* In passing from the drawing-room to the dining-room remember that it is the lady who takes precedence, not the gentleman.

40. It is said that 'too many cooks spoil—the dinner;' but the guest who comes last and keeps it waiting, is the real spoiler.

41. No well-bred host will praise his own wines; nor will any wise man, for excessive laudation breeds suspicion. Good wine needs no bush.

42. There *may be* people who take fish or soup twice—just as there may be, or are, agnostics, and persons who believe in the regeneration of Turkey—but I have never met with them. The reason why you should *not* apply twice for fish or soup at a large party is, because by so doing you delay the appearance of the second course, to the great inconvenience of your fellow-guests, and to the chagrin of your hostess.

43. Floral decorations are essential, but a dinner-table should not be converted into a *parterre*. You ask your guests to partake of your hospitality, not to smell or look at your flowers. A walk through Covent Garden is pleasant, but does not satisfy the appetite.

44. Do not ask a lady to take wine until she has *finished* her fish or soup.

45. There are some customs more honoured in the breach than the observance, and this is one: I can find no reason why persons at one end of the table should idiotically nod to others at the other end, and go through the pantomime of sipping wine from their wine-glasses.

46. But in remote regions, where this custom lingers,



politeness dictates that you should comply with it. And in complying, take the same wine as that selected by the person with whom you drink.

47. He who advised us to do at Rome as the Romans did was a true gentleman.

48. A great authority on etiquette is responsible for the following directions; for my own part I cannot conceive in what society they can be necessary: An unpolished person, if admitted into good society, will have intelligence enough to adopt its habits and customs, and will learn more in a day from observation than in a month from the study of manuals of society.

49. 'Never use your knife to convey your food to your mouth under any circumstances.' This appears to be a not uncommon practice in the United States; and a story is told of a negro waiter who, observing it in a guest of unlimited appetite, hastily interposed with the agonised exclamation: 'Sah, sah! don't cut *dat hole* any wider, or there'll be nuffin left for anybody else!'

50. 'If at dinner you are requested to help anyone to sauce, do not pour it over the meat or vegetables, but on one side. If you should have to carve and help a joint, do not load a person's plate—it is vulgar; also, in serving soup, one ladleful to each plate is sufficient.'

51. 'Fish should always be helped with a silver fish-slice, and your own portion of it divided by the fork aided by a piece of bread.'

52. 'Eat peas with a dessert-spoon; and curry also.'

53. 'As a general rule, in helping anyone at table, never use a knife where you can use a spoon.'

54. 'Do not pick your teeth much at table, as however satisfactory a practice to yourself, to witness it is not at all pleasant.' I should rather say, don't pick your teeth at all!

55. Menu cards are not necessary at small dinner-parties, and would offend by their pretentiousness.

56. Light your dinner-table with wax candles; the heat and flare of gas are fatal to the right enjoyment of a good dinner. Don't use coloured shades for your lamps or candelabra, or the reflections on the faces of your guests will be as unpleasant as those cast by the coloured bottles in a druggist's window.

57. A dinner-table is said to be laid for so many 'covers. A 'cover' comprises :

Two large knives.

Three large forks.

Silver knife and fork for fish.

Wine-glass for sherry.

Table spoon for soup.

Wine-glass for hock.

Wine-glass for champagne.

In the centre, between the knives and forks, is placed the dinner-bread wrapped up in a serviette. The dessert-spoons and small forks are placed before the guest on an empty plate before the sweets are passed round ; and extra knives and forks are supplied as they are required.

Salad is always served on a salad plate.

58. Avoid onions ; or, after partaking of them, shut yourself up in the solitude of your chamber until you are purified. A story is told of a man who, having indulged in this nutritive but strongly-scented vegetable, entered an inn some time afterwards with the remark that for the last two hours he had had the wind in his teeth. 'Had you ?' exclaimed the individual whom he addressed, 'then, by Jove, sir, the wind had the worst of it !'

59. Be scrupulously abstemious in the matter of wine. To enter the drawing-room 'flushed' is a grave offence. A glass at dinner and a glass during dessert should suffice. What says George Herbert ?

'Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame

When once it is within thee, but before

May'st rule it as thou list ; and pour the shame,

Which it would pour on thee, upon the floor.

It is most just to throw that on the ground

Which would throw *me* there, if I keep the round. . . .

'If reason move not, gallants, quit the room ;

(All in a shipwreck shift their several way) ;

Let not a common ruin thee entomb ;

Be not a beast in courtesy, but stay,

Stay at the third cup, or forego the place :

Wine, above all things, does God's stamp deface.'

It is curious, if true, that the ungracious custom of gentlemen sitting at table to drink, after dinner had come to an end, was introduced by the Scottish Queen, St. Margaret, whose memory is still honoured north of the Tweed. Surprised and pained to see the Scottish thegns rising from table before Twyst, her chaplain, could say grace, she offered a cup of rare wine to every-

body who should remain. Thus the fashion of 'hard drinking' arose in the excellent practice of 'thanksgiving.'

60. On no account let dinner be begun until grace has been said, and said reverently. It is a graceless custom to sit down to a meal without any expression of gratitude to Him from whom all blessings flow.

61. If liqueurs be included in your bill of fare, let them be handed round to your guests on a small silver salver in succession to the ices.

62. Champagne is drunk only during dinner; with dessert provide claret and sherry. This is in contradiction to Lord Brougham's utterance, that 'if he knew anything, it was that claret should be drunk after game.'

63. Nothing, it is said, indicates a well-bred man more than a proper mode of eating his dinner. A man may pass muster by dressing well, and may sustain himself tolerably in conversation; but if he be not properly *au fait*, dinner will betray him.

64. So, too, the qualities of a hostess are tested by the manner in which her guests are entertained at dinner. Many can give a ball, or an evening party, who fail miserably when they attempt a dinner. To succeed, nerve is necessary, and order, and intelligence, and tact.

65. We want a modern royal anti-smoker to issue another 'Counterblast against Tobacco.' Whether smoking is good or bad, wholesome or injurious, I need not here inquire; but the *excess* of smoking is, at all events, as noxious to the smoker as it is disagreeable to his neighbours. If you must have your pipe or your weed, retire to some apartment kept exclusively as a smoking-room. Do not smoke in a lady's presence; not even if her good-nature prompt her to yield assent. You have no right to impregnate her garments with pot-house odour.

66. Give up to 'cads' and 'snobs' the practice of smoking in the streets or in a theatre.

67. Of course I know that Raleigh smoked, and that Tennyson smokes, and that Carlyle is a tenacious smoker. Of course I remember what Bulwer Lytton, another persistent smoker, says in his 'What Will He Do With It?'—here is the passage—'He who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs, or refused himself the softest consolation, next to that which comes from heaven. "What, softer than woman?" whispers

the young reader. Yes, woman teases as well as consoles. Woman makes half the sorrows which she boasts the privilege to soothe. Woman consoles us, it is true, while we are young and handsome ! when we are old and ugly, woman snubs and scolds us. On the whole, then, woman in this scale, the weed in that—Jupiter, hang out thy balance, and weigh them both ; and if thou give the preference to woman, all I can say is, the next time Juno ruffles thee, O Jupiter, try the weed ! But, in spite of all this, I say, eschew (not chew !) the weed ; or, at all events, if you try it, let it not be in any lady's company.

68. Let your dress become you, not you become your dress.

69. Dress so that anybody shall *feel* you are well-dressed, without being able to explain *why*.

70. To dress wholly out of 'the fashion' is eccentricity ; to dress in it, servility. Adapt the fashion to yourself, and remember that dress is not meant to be a disguise.

71. Do not make an ostentation of your dress. Says Goldsmith : 'The person whose clothes are extremely fine, I am too apt to consider as not being possessed of any superiority of fortune, but resembling those barbarians who are found to wear all the gold they have in the world in a bob at the nose.'

72. There are three articles of dress which pre-eminently show the gentleman—hat, boots, gloves.

73. Do not cover yourself with trinkets and precious stones.

74. A lady should wish to be noticed for herself, not for her dress. There is a strange custom in newspapers nowadays—they describe minutely the dress of the principal ladies at a wedding or a flower-show, a garden-party, or a royal drawing-room. Is the dress, then, more than the woman ?

75. Let your linen be as spotless as your morals. There is something wrong at bottom in the man who does not object to wear a dirty shirt.

76. Ladies should remember that the art of dressing well lies in the happy combination and harmony of colours.

77. When people are singing, do them the courtesy of listening, or pretending to listen. If you do not like music yourself, remember that others may. Besides, when a person is endeavouring to entertain you, the least you can do is to show your gratitude for the intention.

78. If you are asked to sing, it is good taste to comply ; but

take care that you choose something within the range of your powers. Amateurs too often forget the fable of the frog that aped the ox.

79. Good manners is the art of making easy the persons with whom we are brought into contact.

80. There is a deep truth in La Rochefoucauld's saying, that nothing so much prevents us from being natural as the desire of appearing so.

81. Self-consciousness is the essence of vulgarity. True politeness is always so busy in thinking of others that it has no time to think of itself.

82. Douglas Jerrold throws a good deal of ridicule upon the smaller observances of etiquette. 'It is not etiquette,' he says, 'to go to the opera with the smallest sprig upon the waistcoat or the cravat; to take soup twice; to salute a lady first; to ride in an omnibus [this is a vulgar fallacy; it is open to any lady or gentleman to ride in an omnibus, or to travel third-class, or go down the river in a penny steam-boat]; to go to a party before ten or eleven o'clock, or to a ball before midnight . . . to refrain a day from shaving [beard and moustache are now *la mode*]; to have an appetite; to offer anything to drink to a person of high rank; to appear surprised when the ladies leave the table at dessert-time; to dress in black in the morning, or in colours in the evening,' and so on. All this is pure fallacy; and by a similar method of misconstruction morality itself might be made to look absurd. Etiquette may have its follies, like everything else, but it is absolutely essential, nevertheless, to the orderliness and decorum of society. It is a kind of social police. In fact, where persons congregate together, it springs naturally, because without it their relations would soon become intolerable. At bottom, it exists as the protection of the weak against the strong.

83. Gentility, says *Αγωγος*, is neither in title, manner, nor fashion, but *in the mind*. A high sense of honour—a determination never to take a mean advantage of another—an adherence to truth—delicacy and politeness towards those with whom you may have dealings—are the essential and distinguishing characteristics of a gentleman.

84. The nature of things, as Lord Chesterfield remarks, is always and everywhere the same, but their modes vary more or less in every country. These modes constitute etiquette;



and good-breeding consists in easily conforming to them, or in assuming them at proper times and in proper places.

85. I grant you that Stillingfleet was nowhere as a poet ; but in his smooth decasyllables he embodied much sound sense when he penned the following couplets :

‘ Study with care politeness, that must teach  
The modish form of gesture and of speech :  
In vain formality, with matron mien,  
And pertness, ape her with familiar grin.  
They against nature for applauses strain,  
Distort themselves, and give all others pain.  
She moves with easy, though with measured pace,  
And shows no part of study, but the grace ;  
Yet e’en by this, man is but half refined,  
Unless philosophy subdues the mind.’

86. A word about dancing. Bear yourself with moderation in the liveliest ‘measure.’ Some couples go through the waltz as if they were ‘dancing dervishes,’ and indulge in an *abandon* which, to say the least of it, is indecorous.

87. *Lead* your partner through a quadrille ; do not *haul* her. A lady’s waist should be sacred, and there can be no excuse for clasping it as if you wanted to steady yourself by it.

88. Dance quietly. Do not go through your steps as if you were a dancing-master ; nor move your limbs wildly, as if you were executing an Indian war-dance.

89. I am not sure that a man in a dress-coat and black trousers, going through quadrille or cotillion, can be considered either a noble or a beautiful sight ; but I am sure that it is better he should dance as if he knew something about it, than like a country clown, who mistakes muscular activity for grace.

90. ‘Above all,’ says a sage, ‘do not be prone to quarrel in a ball-room ; it disturbs the harmony of the company, and should be avoided, if possible. Recollect that a thousand little derelictions from strict propriety may occur through the *ignorance* or *stupidity* of the aggressor, and not from any intention to annoy ; remember, also, that *really well-bred* women will not thank you for making them conspicuous by over-officiousness in their defence, unless, indeed, there be any serious or glaring violation of decorum. In small matters, ladies are both able and willing to take care of themselves, and would prefer being allowed to overwhelm the unlucky offenders in their own way.’

91. Society now patronises no other dances than the following :—Quadrille, Lancers, valse, polka (or galop), and cotillion. The latter is sometimes made the medium for giving costly presents ; but the custom is objectionable, and essentially vulgar.

92. It is not the custom now to have a ‘master of the ceremonies’ at public balls, and the stewards do not make introductions. Introductions are made, therefore, only through the agency of ‘mutual friends.’

93. Young ladies usually return to their chaperons after each dance, as also after partaking of refreshments or of supper ; and they must on no account at any time remain long away from them.

94. A lady may go round the ball-room *once* on her cavalier’s arm ; but it is not ‘good form’ to promenade up and down.

95. Nor should a couple stand arm-in-arm during the pauses in a quadrille figure, or in a valse.

96. Society wisely discourages all conspicuous manifestations of personal feeling. Lovers are not expected to ‘make love’ in public, nor married couples to afford extravagant evidence of conjugal tenderness. And the sincerity of the affection may reasonably be doubted which parades itself in public. When our hearts are deeply moved, we do not take the world into our confidence.

97. We do not use the word ‘ball’ on an invitation-card, on however large a scale may be the entertainment. The same form of invitation is employed whether a great ball or a small party is contemplated ; but in the latter case the significant words ‘small’ and ‘early’ are written or printed on the card.

98. Invitations to a ball are issued in the name of the hostess only, unless the host be a widower or a bachelor. If the host be a widower with an adult daughter, or a bachelor with a grown-up sister taking charge of his establishment, the invitation will be issued in their joint names.

99. It is customary for a ball to be opened either by the hostess herself or by one of her daughters. That is, the lady in question, with the gentleman of highest rank in the room, dances in the first quadrille at the top of the room.

100. At a town ball the hostess receives her guests at the head of the staircase ; at a country ball, at the door of the ball-room. She shakes hands with her guests in the order of their

arrival. The ladies of a party advance towards the hostess, followed by the gentlemen of their party. A lady and gentleman do not ascend the staircase or enter the ball-room arm-in-arm. The lady, in entering, takes the *pas*.

101. When royalty is expected, dancing does not begin until its arrival. If the guest be a prince, the ball is opened by his dancing with his hostess, her husband or son acting as *vis-à-vis*. If the guest be a princess, she dances with her host, and the hostess acts as *vis-à-vis*.

102. If a prince wish to dance with a lady present whom he does not know, his equerry informs her of the prince's intention, and leads her to the prince, introducing her as Miss A. or Mrs. B. The prince bows and offers his arm ; the lady curtsies and takes it. She does not address him until he has addressed her. The same etiquette is observed in the case of a princess, whom a stranger must no more presume to seek as his partner than he would venture to ask the Queen to join him in a Scotch reel !

103. If ever royalty honour you with its company, you must receive it at the street-door. The host offers his arm to a princess, and the hostess follows, radiant, leaning on the consecrated arm of a prince. The royal guests, on entering, shake hands with the host and hostess, who simultaneously and respectively bow and curtsey. The same order of procedure takes place when they depart.

104. At a ball you will, of course, ask the daughter of the house to dance ; and, as a gentleman, if you see any young lady persistently left partnerless, you will relieve her of the reproach.

105. You go to a ball to dance, and not to stand against the wall, or by the door, with the smirk of priggishness on your foolish face, as if the whole thing were *a baw*, and everybody in the room unworthy of your august notice, except contemptuously. If Heaven would only 'gie you to see yourself as others see you,' rest assured you would adopt no such idiotic conduct.

106. People in the country adhere much more punctiliously to the rules of etiquette than do people in town. For instance, when the host or hostess is informed by the butler in a solemn whisper that supper is served, the host offers his arm to the lady of highest rank present, while the hostess undergoes ex-

cessive mental torture in endeavouring to send in her principal guests in strict obedience to the law of precedence. In town, the host leads the way with the lady of highest rank, and to the guests generally it is enough to say, with that benevolent hostess, Lady Macbeth—

‘Stand not upon the order of your going,  
But go at once.’

107. A gentleman conducting a lady in to supper will, of course, escort her back to the ball-room; and this he will do, though in the supper-room she meet with friends, and plunge into that busy conversation upon nothings usual in such circumstances. The grace of patience well becomes a man! The lady will observe the same rule, and return to the ball-room with her protecting cavalier—unless she be engaged for ‘the next dance,’ and her partner come in search of her.

108. Gratuities are not given to servants on the occasion of a ball. Your entertainers will not thank you for supposing or implying that their domestics are not sufficiently paid.

109. At State balls ladies wear full evening dress, without flowers, lappets, or court-trains. Gentlemen wear full Court-dress, and encase their shapely limbs in breeches and silk stockings. They remove their swords when intending to dance.

110. No official or formal reception is given to guests attending a State ball; nor are they announced when they enter the ball-room.

111. Whether at dinners, balls, suppers, or ‘at homes,’ remember Dean Swift’s maxim: ‘Whoever makes the fewest persons uneasy is the best bred in the company.’

112. I quote again from the Dean of St. Patrick’s: ‘As the best law is founded upon reason, so are the best manners. And as some lawyers have introduced unreasonable things into common law, so likewise many teachers have introduced absurd things into common good manners.’

113. ‘One principal point of this art is, to suit our behaviour to the three several degrees of men: our superiors, our equals, and those below us.’

114. ‘Pride, ill-nature, and want of sense, are the three great sources of ill-manners: without some one of these defects, no man will behave himself ill for want of experience, or of what, in the language of fools, is called knowing the world.’

115. 'There is a pedantry in manners, as in all arts and sciences, and sometimes in trade.'

116. Some persons show such a stiffness and formality in their manners as to impress you with the idea that every action is studied from a manual of etiquette. But there can be no really fine manners where there is no naturalness.

117. Good manners may exist without good breeding; but good breeding cannot exist without good manners.

118. A want of punctuality is a serious impertinence. It assumes that *your* time is of more value than any other person's.

119. There is no flattery so exquisite as 'the flattery of listening.' It may be doubted whether the greatest mind is ever proof against it. Socrates may have loved Plato best of all his disciples because he listened best.

120. Be careful how you pay a compliment. Unhappy you, if it should be mistaken for an insult!

121. Never compliment a wife at her husband's expense.

122. 'A man's manners,' says Sir Henry Taylor, 'have much real and intrinsic significancy, in so far forth as they are the result of his individual nature and taste, and not merely learnt or adopted from the society which he frequents. There is a conventional manner which tells nothing, and may conceal much; but there is also a natural manner by which a man may be known.'

123. The art of living easily is to live within your means.

124. In making gifts let them be in proportion to your means. A rich man does not thank a poor man for making him a present which he knows the giver cannot afford.

125. A gift should never be such as to load the person who receives it with a sense of obligation.

126. It has been well said that we should take only from those to whom, in the converse of circumstances, we would gladly give.

127. The etiquette of Gifts is of real importance. They often offend when designed to please.

128. It is said that the surest way of losing a friend is by lending him money. So, too, if you want to get rid of a person, the best plan is to lead him into an argument, and confute him in it. He will never forgive you!

129. Be careful how you exercise your wit. If curses, like chickens, come home to roost, so do epigrams.



130. Do not applaud the wit which is levelled at your friend ; it may next be directed against yourself.

131. It is always easy to say a rude thing, but never wise.

132. A sarcasm is like a boomerang : when it leaves your tongue, you never know where it may alight.

133. What saith Chaucer ?

‘ For when a man hath overgreat a wit,  
Full oft him happeth to misusen it.’

134. Sydney Smith is, I think, the only instance of a wit who was also a man of fine manners ; but then, Sydney Smith’s wit was always good-tempered.

135. I do not think a wit can be a polite man. He will rather wound your feelings than spoil his repartee.

136. Let it be said of you as it was said of Macaulay, that he remembered everything ‘except an injury.’

137. I cannot too often repeat that the essence of all good manners is a wise consideration for the feelings—even the prejudices—of others.

138. Avoid ostentation and extravagance in your entertainments. Says Sir Henry Taylor : ‘Of all excess in luxury, that of the table is the most offensive to the taste of those who would wish to see the higher classes distinguished by refinement at least, if not by simplicity of life.’

139. Ahint anent ‘Five o’Clock Teas :’—The tea-tray should only make its appearance at the now famous hour of five P.M., and the hostess then fills for each guest the cup that cheers, etc. Visitors who call shortly before the hour are invited to stay ; if they come from a distance, the usual hour may be anticipated a little.

139. After an engagement has been concluded, it is customary for the gentleman’s relatives to call upon those of the *fiancée*, and invite them to their houses, before the relatives of the latter make any sign.

140. Gentlemen do not take off their hats to one another ; this is a courtesy reserved for the ladies. Gentlemen generally recognise each other with a nod.

141. A bride enters the church on her father’s *right* arm ; she leaves it leaning on her husband’s *left*.

142. When there are more ladies than gentlemen at a dinner-party, the hostess should go down alone, and leave the gentleman of highest rank to take down the lady of second rank ; in

this case, the gentleman will place himself at table on the right of the hostess.

143. There is an etiquette in servants' cockades. The only persons whose servants are entitled to this unmeaning distinction are ambassadors, officers of the Crown, members of the Royal households, lords-lieutenant, and officers of the army and navy.

144. You must never send a visiting card by post.

145. When you meet a friend in the street, it must depend on your degree of intimacy whether you walk with him or not ; but with a lady you must not walk, unless she directly or indirectly invite you.

146. If you are driving out with ladies, you will take the back seat of the carriage ; and when the carriage stops, you must promptly descend, and offer your hand to assist them in getting out.

147. Let your *walk in life* be distinguished by unassuming grace. Look from your window, and observe the gait of the passers-by ; you will see at once 'what to avoid'—the tread of the grenadier, the clumsy shuffle, the dancing master's trip, the heel-and-toe movement, the pretentious slide. But it is easier to know what to avoid than what to imitate. Perhaps imitation is not advisable ; and the chief thing to remember is, that you should walk as if your body had a soul in it. Virgil tells us of Juno that you saw the goddess in her gait ; and 'grace in her steps' is one of the characteristics of Milton's 'Eve.' And yet to see some women walk across a drawing-room !

148. A married woman must bear in mind that she has in charge not only her own name but her husband's ; and her bearing, motions, address, should be that of the wife.

149. Do not rush into a friendship with everybody you meet. Friendships so quickly made are quickly broken.

150. A married lady should treat a stranger with reserve, and an acquaintance with reticence.

151. If you pass a friend with a lady whom you do not know, you must lift your hat to him, and not nod.

152. There is a grisly fairy story of a beautiful young woman from whose mouth, when she opened it, dropped frogs and toads. I am always reminded of it when I hear a young lady talking slang.

153. A man who talks slang in a lady's hearing stands in need of the Roman Catholic 'discipline.'

154. A 'slow' girl may be disagreeable, but a 'fast' girl is detestable. Men do not laugh *with* her, but *at* her; and in forfeiting their respect she does not win their confidence.

155. I do not know which is the more displeasing: the loud laugh or the impudent stare. These are *not* 'the looks and tones that dart,' as Mr. Moore says, 'an instant sunshine through the heart; as if the soul that minute caught some treasure it through life had sought;' there is no soul in them—and no brain!

156. A young lady should remember that silence is golden, and not speak too often, or too long, or too glibly. Let what you say be to the purpose, and let it be so said that if we forget the speech we may recollect the manner of it. 'Learn to hold thy tongue,' says quaint Thomas Fuller; 'five words cost Zacharias forty weeks' silence.'

157. Men in conversation should avoid retailing the old and senseless jokes against women. A gentleman will respect the sex to which belongs his wife, his mother, his sister. These jokes, moreover, have lost their point, because they are no longer true.

158. In making 'calls,' remember that cards are never 'sent in,' and that a servant who knows his duty will not hand them to his mistress. Give your name distinctly to the servant, and he will announce you. On your departure, leave your husband's card in the hall for the gentleman of the house.

159. Do not leave a letter unanswered, and lose no time in answering. *Bis dat, qui cito dat*; that is, by replying quickly, you double the value of your reply.

160. Do not add to your letters the epigraph, 'In haste.' Your correspondent has a right to expect that you will answer at leisure, and with proper consideration.

161. Cross your *l's* in writing, but do not cross your letters.

162. Elaborate monograms and gorgeous crests are very vulgar.

163. Ladies cannot appear at balls, or public receptions, or garden-parties, or the like, except under the escort of a *chaperone*—I mean, of course, when they have no mother or elder sister to escort them.\*

\* As I have referred to chaperones, it will be advisable to say a word or two upon their duties, which a writer in the *Queen* justly describes as, 'very

164. With intimate friends, says *Αγῶγος*, you may dispense with ceremony as much as may be deemed desirable by all

important.' Upon the way in which a chaperone fulfils those duties will depend the estimation in which her charge is held in society, and even her future happiness may be compromised. Some persons apparently think that a chaperone is needed only in a ball-room or large assembly ; but though she is there indispensable, she is scarcely less necessary elsewhere. She precedes her young ladies up the stairs and into the reception-room ; introduces them to the hostess, if they are not already acquainted with her ; and selects a position whence she can conveniently and securely overlook their movements. It is a great advantage to girls, we are told, to have a stationary chaperone, as they then know where to find her in the interval between the dances. If partners are introduced to them whom she does not know, they must introduce them to her ; and if they omit to do so, she must remind them of the omission. She will of course endeavour, quietly and without fuss, to learn something about their partners ; so that she may know whether to allow, or prevent, any further intimacy. An undesirable acquaintance is best 'nipped in the bud ;' if suffered to reach a certain stage, it may be difficult or even impossible to check it. A chaperone should, if possible, arrange to go to tea or supper while her charges are dancing ; otherwise she must leave them in the care of some suitable person. Young ladies should intimate to their chaperone when they are going to tea or supper ; and if the crowd renders it difficult for them to approach her, as is often the case in London, they can give her some little signal, such as a nod, which she will understand. A good chaperone interests herself in finding partners for her young ladies, if they have not many acquaintances ; and unless they are well-known and popular she would remain in the ball-room, rather than ensconce herself in ever so comfortable a corner, whence they would not be so likely to get partners.

In London, a wise chaperone will not allow her young friends to stay late, excepting occasionally at the houses of extremely close acquaintances ; 'two o'clock is a very reasonable hour,' and the girls should always depart cheerfully at the first summons. There is nothing gained by putting off the inevitable hour ; and, moreover, it is not good style to linger among the latest, or, as it is called, to 'sweep the room.' In the country, where dances are of rarer occurrence, more liberty is permissible.

At a reception the chaperone promenades the room, speaking to her friends, and the young ladies must keep within her orbit, like satellites within the system of a planet :

With radiant brow and matron mien,  
She walks among the crowd, serene,  
And in her train move blushing girls,  
With flashing eyes and glossy curls,—  
And many a youth heaves wistful sigh  
As each fair form sweeps peerless by !

If at a concert they cannot obtain seats at her side, they must keep as near her as possible, and they must be made to understand that their chaperone knows her duty, and will do it. She will not be less cautious in supervising their choice of girl-friends than of male acquaintances ; for

parties ; but with strangers, or persons with whom you are only imperfectly acquainted, every deviation from established custom is *a slight*, as it tends to show how little their society is appreciated ; and will (if they possess a grain of spirit) be resented accordingly.

165. In another man's house do not take upon yourself to play the host, not even at the host's request.

166. If in company with two ladies—to neither of whom are you engaged—do not devote yourself to the one more than to the other. The '*spretæ injuria formæ*' wakes feelings which are not easily appeased.

167. If you pay a lady a compliment, let it drop from your lips as if it were the accidental and unconscious expression of a profound truth.

168. Never profess to be that which you are not. Every-

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a 'fast' girl, given to slang and chaff, and prone to familiarities with men which, however innocent, are indecorous and painful, carries about and around her an infectious atmosphere.

At a garden-party the chaperone may allow a little more freedom of movement ; her charges may play lawn-tennis, or saunter about the grounds with their friends, but before leaving her side they should inform her of their intentions, and obtain her approval. When staying in a country house, etiquette requires that the young ladies should appear in the drawing-room before dinner with their chaperone, going to her room to accompany her downstairs. In short, the chaperone must keep a strict, though guarded, and not too obvious a watch over the doings of her charges, and mention to them firmly and without delay anything in their conduct which elicits her disapproval.

'When going to a ball in the country, a chaperone prefers having her young people in the carriage with her ; but sometimes this cannot be managed, and then she exerts herself to see that there is some chaperone in the carriage with them. There are several places where no chaperone will allow her girls to go without either herself or some substitute. Until they have been out two or three years, and have gained experience of the ways and proprieties of society, she will not allow them to visit in country houses without her, nor consider a brother a sufficient chaperone at a ball. She may perhaps allow them, two together, to walk unattended in Belgravia ; but this permission will not extend to the Park, where young ladies cannot walk unchaperoned. It is growing permissible now—that is to say, it is often done—for young ladies to ride attended only by a groom ; but it is not good style, and an escort, either male or female, should be provided. It is allowable for young ladies to drive about alone in the afternoon to leave cards, or to call on relatives or exceedingly intimate friends, but not for them to go to tea-parties by themselves. With the chaperone, of course, rests the decision as to what parties are to be attended, or what acquaintances made.' In a word, she acts as the guide, philosopher, and friend of the young ladies who are put under her charge.



body laughs when the plumes are borrowed ; but if they are imaginary, the laugh may change into a frown.

169. There is a fine art in offering favours. You may give a person eternal offence while thinking you are doing him a kindness.

170. Do not press a favour where you see it will be unwelcome.

171. Be careful how you convince your friend that he has made a mistake. Few persons are generous enough to forgive those who prove them to have been in the wrong.

172. A never sees B fall into an error, without feeling convinced that it would have been impossible for himself to have done so. But A's assumption of superior wisdom will hardly be acceptable to B.

173. It is not only the best policy—I am not now speaking as a moralist—but the highest politeness to speak the truth always. Every person feels flattered by the reflection that you think him too clever to be cajoled.

174. Treat all the guests whom you meet at your friend's table as, for the time, your equals.

175. Do not claim the acquaintance of a man of rank on the ground that you once met him at a house to which you had been invited.

176. Colonel Hanger recommended economists to provide their servants each with a pair of large spectacles, so that a lark might seem as large as a fowl, and a twopenny loaf as big as a quartern. Some people put on these magnifying glasses when they look at themselves or their possessions ; but they forget that *others* don't wear them, and that to them the loaf will not appear any bigger than it really is. This forgetfulness is unfortunate when they begin to talk in a style suitable to the spectacles !

177. There are two kinds of gossip, the good-humoured and the scandalous ; the gossip that touches lightly on faults and foibles, and amusing incidents, and curious contrasts ; the gossip that peers into the privacy of domestic life, and either invents or misrepresents. The latter no gentleman will indulge in or listen to ; the former is the salt of ordinary conversation. We cannot help taking an interest in our fellows ; and there is no reason why we should not, so long as that interest is not malignant.

178. If your friend have a secret, he will be sure to fret until he can confide it to you. It takes three persons to hold a secret.

179. Remember that the most disagreeable talk is that which turns upon a man's or woman's maladies. A gentleman will never admit that his constitution is anything but sound—in conversation.

180. Of all bores the greatest is he who carries his pills, powders, and plaisters into the society of his friends ; who bids the world listen when he sneezes ; and thinks his rheumatism a matter of national concern.

181. Now, a man afflicted with rheumatism may be a martyr in his own eyes, but he will never be a hero in the eyes of others.

182. Shun the wretch who goes about asking riddles and making puns.

183. Conversation is the pasture-ground of the many ; therefore it should keep to the levels. There are very few who can ascend the heights, and none ought to sink into the depths.

184. Mr. Vincent Crummies, having a real pump, wanted a play written up to it. You will find that persons in conversation very often try to bring in *their* pump—an anecdote, perhaps, as old as Horace Walpole, or a joke borrowed from Mr. Joseph Miller.

185. Conversation should be a series of pauses linked together by a few suitable words ; many people, however, in their anxiety to bring out their words forget their pauses.

186. 'The honourablest part of talk is to give the occasion ; and again to moderate and pass to something else, for then a man leads the dance.'

187. 'Generally, men ought to find the difference between saltiness and bitterness.'

188. 'Speech of a man's self ought to be seldom, and well chosen.'

189. 'Speech of touch towards others should be sparingly used ; for discourse ought to be as a field, without coming home to any man.'

190. 'Discretion of speech is more than eloquence ; and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal, is more than to speak in good words, or in good order.'

191. Let your talk be always adapted carefully to Time and

Place. Don't prate about homœopathy to a doctor, or about the blessings of celibacy to a young lady engaged to be married.

192. The touchstone of good manners is the way in which a man behaves to his superiors or inferiors.

193. Servility towards one's superiors is as incompatible with good manners as arrogance towards an inferior.

194. A gentleman will respect the feelings even of a servant, who *has* feelings, and does not include them in his wages.

195. There is a science in bowing, though not exactly of the kind described by Sir Pertinax Macsycophant. Some men incline their heads so stiffly as to impress a spectator with the idea that their necks are enclosed in iron cravats; others bend them with a humility that suggests an almost Oriental prostration. In bowing to a slight acquaintance there should be more reserve than in bowing to a friend; but 'stiffness' should always be avoided. The hat should be lifted *off* the head, which, at the same time, should be inclined easily and gracefully.

196. In walking, keep to the right, but always give a lady the wall. When I see a boor force a lady to the edge of the pavement, I always feel inclined to push him into the gutter!

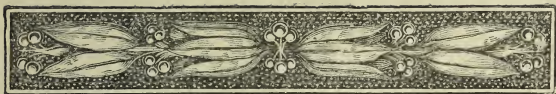
197. There is a great art in entering a room. Some persons stride in with a shamefaced air, as if they thought they had no business across the threshold; others swagger in defiantly, with head erect and chest expanded, like a professional athlete making his appearance before his 'patrons'; others, again, steal in noiselessly, as if deprecating the slightest attention, and priding themselves on their humility. Oh, there is a fine field for the study of character in the ways and fashions of guests as they pass into the presence of the hostess!

198. Enter a room as if you felt yourself entitled to a welcome, but wished to take no undue advantage of it.

199. I have seen persons behave in a drawing-room as if *they* were the only guests, and the remainder of the company had been assembled to admire—at a distance—their intimacy with the hostess.

200. Good temper is the essence of good manners.

201. Finally, in the words of Hazlitt, there can be no surer proof of low origin, or of an innate meanness of disposition, than to be always talking and thinking of *being genteel*.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE HOUSEHOLD.

‘He will command his children and his household.’

‘She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.’

‘Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household?’

The Happiness of a Household Dependent on the Relations between Master and Servant—The present Race of Servants Defended—Servants are what their Masters make them—Servants in the Olden Time no better than their Successors—Duties of an Employer—Good and Bad Masters—Necessity of Courtesy in Dealing with Servants—The Importance of Setting a Good Example—Remarks on Employers and Employed from a General Point of View—Functions of Different Servants Glanced at—Each Servant should have his or her Distinct Work—Sir Arthur Helps on the Art of Living with Inferiors—Method Essential to a well-ordered Household—Punctuality—Anecdote of Beau Brummell—A Homily on Economy—A Protest against ‘Keeping up Appearances’—Social Ambition : Its Good and Bad Side—Failures in Life, and their Causes—Need of a better Understanding between Classes—Why this better Understanding does not Exist—Superior and Inferior—Our Influence on One Another—Want of Courtesy on the Part of the ‘Higher Orders’—Want of Self-respect on the Part of the ‘Lower’—Emerson’s Fable, and its Application—Influence of a Well-ordered Household on Society—Value of Etiquette as an Agent of Social Reform.



HE order, tranquillity, and happiness of every household must necessarily depend to a great extent upon the relations which exist between the master and his servants, the employer and the employed. I do not refer, of course, to those palatial establishments in which the master rarely comes into contact with his ‘domestics ;’ in which the steward or the housekeeper has the entire supervision of the ‘servants’ hall ;’ though even

in these the influence of the head of the house is felt more or less directly in the lowest strata : but to ordinary families, in which the master and the mistress exercise an immediate personal control over their dependents. It is fashionable just now to complain of the follies and vices, the inefficiency and dishonesty, of servants, and to contrast them with that supposed superior race who 'waited' upon our forefathers and foremothers ; and the complaint is echoed and kept up by the comic journals, which it supplies with material for endless quips and quiddities. That a certain amount of change has taken place cannot, I think, be doubted ; as a rule servants are better educated than they were, and improved education has widened their views and stimulated their ambition, so that they are less disposed than of old to remain contented with their positions, and are more desirous of pushing their way in the world. This is simply saying that they are not insensible to the effects of a movement which has taken place in all classes. That, as a whole, they are less honest, less faithful, less skilful, I do not believe. There are good servants and bad servants now, as there always have been and always will be. You have only to cast a glance over the chronicles of past generations—the diaries and letters and memoirs which enrich our literature—to see that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers made the same complaint that we make. In Shakespeare's time we read of

' Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,  
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,  
Wears out his teeth, much like his master's ass,  
For nought but provender ;'

But we read also of others :

' Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,  
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves ;  
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,  
Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lined their coats,  
Do themselves homage.'

If the plays of our dramatists, from Congreve to Sheridan, may be accepted as faithful presentments of manners, we must conclude that servants were formerly distinguished by a license of language and an insubordination of conduct which nowadays no master would tolerate. Who, for instance, would endure the humours of a 'Tag' or a 'Miss Pert,' or put up



with the impudent familiarities of the valets and maids who figure in our old comedies?

I suspect that, in the present as in the past, servants are much what their masters make them. A good master will make a good servant; his confidence will be repaid by honesty, his kindness by respect. The employer who pursues his or her employé with a constant suspicion cannot be astonished, or should not be astonished, if he or she be requited by an air of dissatisfaction and indifference. To command the best service you must be worthy of it. I do not advise you to place unwonted trust in a person of whom you know nothing; you would not act with such an extravagance of generosity towards your equal, and why should you do so towards your inferior? But when once you have tested and proved a servant's conscientiousness, you should thenceforth treat him with the trust he deserves. So, too, when you are convinced of his truthfulness, you must show an absolute reliance on his word, and not wrong him by an ill-concealed implication that at some time or other his conscience will fail him, and he will deceive you. Many employers behave as if the laws of good manners did not apply to their dealings with servants, and after addressing them in violent and unguarded language, affect the greatest surprise that they should exhibit any feelings of annoyance or indignation. Apparently they consider that servants should not be allowed any feelings; that the receipt of wages ought, *ipse facto*, to convert them into machines, incapable of sentiment or emotion, pain or weariness. It is from employers of this class that the complaints of the degeneracy of the present race of servants proceed. My own belief is that there are more good servants than there are good masters; or, to put it in another form, that servants as a body show more of honesty, industry, and faithfulness than masters, as a body, show of gracious consideration and wise sympathy.

The truth is, that many masters and mistresses, while keenly conscious that servants have duties, and rigorously severe in exacting a scrupulous performance of them, choose to forget that certain duties are also incumbent upon *them*. It is not only the payment of wages and the issue of commands that appertain to the master of a household; but prudence equality of temper, and a fair and generous regard for their interests. That Christian maxim, which I have before quoted, as em-

bodilying the philosophy of fine manners, is also applicable here: he must do unto his servants as he would have them do unto him. If he expect them to serve him justly, he must be just; if he expect conscientious service, he must give them conscientious rule. I have said that servants are much what their master makes them: I will go further, and say, they are much what their master *is*; and as you may know a man by the company he keeps, so you may know him by his servants. A master's example is never wholly inoperative; and, therefore, I fully endorse the remark of a modern essayist, that one way in which the characters of servants in high-life might be improved, would be for their masters to shew themselves a little more scrupulous than some of the more fashionable amongst them are wont to be in matters of truth and honesty. 'The adherence to honesty,' says Taylor, 'on the part of the masters might be exemplary; whereas their actual measure of honesty would perhaps be indicated with sufficient indulgence if they were described (in the qualified language which Hamlet applies to himself) to be "indifferent honest." And there is a currency of untruth in daily use amongst fashionable people for purposes of convenience, which proceeds to a much bolder extent than the form of well-understood falsehood by which the middle classes also, not perhaps without some occasional violation of their more tender consciences, excuse themselves from receiving "a guest." We need not affect astonishment at untruthfulness in a servant, if he perceive that we ourselves are sufficiently lax in our observance of accuracy of statement. A disorderly and slatternly mistress must expect to find her servants disorderly and slatternly also. The influence of example can hardly be exaggerated: it is communicated from one person to another, and descends from the highest to the lowest. We shall best ensure a high standard of duty among our dependents by setting up a high standard for ourselves.

These are truisms, you say? Granted; but the philosophy of daily life is made up of truisms, and it is only by acting upon them that we can secure a measure of peace and prosperity for ourselves and others. The worst of it is, that, truisms as they are, they are too generally overlooked. In fact, the whole subject of the conduct of employers towards their servants is one which requires, and would repay, a complete re-examination. Owing to its very familiarity, it seldom

commands an intelligent and careful investigation. Some masters err by treating their servants with too unrestrained a freedom, by permitting them an indecorous license of speech and laxity of behaviour. But familiarity breeds contempt, and few of us can pretend to be heroes in the eyes of our valets. On the other hand, it is not less a fault to cultivate an arrogant demeanour. Chesterfield wisely observes : ‘I am more upon my guard as to my behaviour to my servants, and to others who are called my inferiors, than I am towards my equals, for fear of being suspected of that mean and ungenerous sentiment of desiring to make others feel that difference which fortune has, perhaps too undeservedly, made between us.’ It is difficult, perhaps, to strike the exact mean between superciliousness and excessive familiarity, but we must make every effort to arrive at it. There is nothing more keenly appreciated by servants than that evenness of temper which respects itself at the same time that it respects others.\*

\* Sir Arthur Helps has some wise observations on the art of living with inferiors. A house, he says, may be ever so well arranged for domestic and social comfort, the principal inmates of it well-disposed and accomplished people, their circumstances of life felicitous ; yet if there is a want of that harmony which should extend throughout every house, embracing all the members of the household, there is an under-current of vexation sufficient to infect and deaden all the above-named advantages. To obviate this is one of the great difficulties of modern life, a difficulty not only great in itself, but largely aggravated by mismanagement for many generations. In dealing with servants, we have to deal with some of the worst educated people in the country—not only ill-instructed for the peculiar functions they have to undertake, but ill-educated both in mind and soul, and having all the insubordination of extreme ignorance. This,—adds Sir Arthur, writing upwards of thirty years ago,—this will improve, however ; and perhaps one of the greatest rewards the rich will enjoy for having of late years encouraged and facilitated education amongst the poor, will arise from their being furnished with a wiser, more amiable, and more governable set of dependents. Some pessimists, by the way, arrive at an entirely opposite conclusion ; but, for my part, I side with Sir Arthur Helps. The duties of masters, he continues, are often most inadequately fulfilled, so that a man who wishes to act rightly in this respect often finds that he has to work upon bad material which has already been badly treated. Still, with all these disadvantages, it is surprising how much may be done with servants by firmness, kindness, geniality, and just familiarity. Under the head of kindness ought particularly to be included *full employment*. The master who keeps one servant more than he has absolutely need for is not only a mischief to society, but is unkind to that servant and to all his fellow-servants ; for what is more cruel to a vacant mind than to leave it half employed ? Finally, a master should exercise not only passive but active kindness

I do not conceive it to be a part of my duty to define here the exact duties of the different ranks of servants. They will vary in different households, but only in a small degree: the *general* duties of the cook, the butler, the footman, the lady's-maid, the housemaid, and so on, being thoroughly well understood, and regulated by an etiquette as rigid as any which obtains in the professions. The chief duty of the head of the family is to see that they are never confused; to see that each servant keeps strictly to her separate and proper sphere of work. Only by rigid order and absolute method can the management of a household be successfully conducted; and the larger the household the more necessary becomes this order and method. The employer is not to do the work, but to see that it is done; that each person gets his proper share, and executes that share in the best possible manner and at the exact time.

‘Each duty done at its appointed time,  
Each duty done in its appointed place.’

Any overlapping of functions (so to speak), any interference with each other's work (from whatever motive), inevitably breeds confusion, and leads to waste of effort as well as waste of temper. Division of labour means economy of time; and method is the golden key which unlocks every difficulty. ‘Let all things be done decently and in order,’ writes St. Paul; and the injunction is best obeyed by insisting that there shall be a place for everybody and everybody shall keep that place.

The next condition which a master should enforce is the observance of punctuality. I would endeavour to shun those houses where the servants lose an hour at the beginning of the day, and spend the rest of the day in futile attempts to make up the loss! But the master and mistress must set an example.

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towards his servants; interesting himself in their relationships, partaking their hopes and fears, providing wholesome amusements for them (all work and no play will spoil any servant), and looking upon them, indeed, as his children once or twice removed. Unquestionably, in thus discharging his duty, he will be sure to meet with instances of ingratitude and intractability, with partial defeats as well as only partial successes; but, at all events, he will enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that he has done his best to produce that harmony in his household which, viewed merely with regard to a peaceful and pleasant life, must be looked upon as one of the most desirable attainments in the art of living.—See Sir Arthur Helps's *Friends in Council*, 1st Series, vol. i., pp. 286—288.

Want of punctuality on *their* part will induce want of punctuality on the part of their servants, to the serious discomfort of the family and of their guests. For in an unpunctual household, where a 'few minutes' are esteemed of no value, the engagements made by 'the heads' are always laxly kept, and a general disorganisation follows. If a visitor call, the hostess is not ready. If the carriage be ordered, it is always kept waiting. If dinner be announced for eight o'clock, it makes its appearance thirty minutes later. Such a state of things is fatal to everybody's comfort. It is said that, amongst other follies, Beau Brummell had that of choosing to be always too late for dinner. Wherever he was invited, he liked to be waited for. He considered it a proof of his fashion and consequence; and the higher the rank of his entertainer, the later was the arrival of this impudent *parvenu*. The Marquis of Abercorn had on several occasions submitted silently to this trial of his patience, but at length he resolved to bear it no longer. Accordingly, one day, when he had invited Brummell to dine, he desired to have the dinner on the table punctually at the appointed time. The servants obeyed, and Brummell and the cheese arrived together. The wondering Beau was desired by the master of the house to sit down. He vouchsafed no apology for what had happened, but coolly said, 'I hope, Mr. Brummell, cheese is not disagreeable to you.' The story runs, that Brummell was never again late at that house. The reproof thus severely administered could not have been given in a house where punctuality was not observed; but though it be rude for a guest to be late, it is unpardonable in the host. If Brummells could be forgiven, society would not exonerate their entertainers.

In an age of luxury like the present, to preach economy is by no means popular, and when hundreds of pounds are spent on the decoration of a dinner-table, may appear supererogatory. Yet it is the merest platitude to say that in well-ordered households it will always be kept steadily in view. This does not imply any undue stinting, any meanness, or parsimony, but simply requires that the expenditure shall not exceed—shall, if possible, be kept within—the income. In many houses will be found an excessive outlay in some department, while others are forced down to a point incompatible with efficiency; but this is not economy. If a man take out of one pocket a sum equal to or larger than he puts into another, he will have



no surplus at the year's end. I have observed that in the best-appointed households—in households where all things are done in excellent taste and on an ample scale—a wise economy prevails. Nothing is wasted; there is no profusion, but there is no cheeseparing. As Louis XII. said that he had rather see his courtiers laugh at his avarice than his people weep at his extravagance, so a wise housekeeper will be willing that his friends shall respect his prudence rather than smile covertly at his ostentation.

The great enemy to economy is the mania for keeping up appearances which prevails in English society. Jones's house must be as large as Brown's; he must retain as many servants; he must give as many dinners; though his income is smaller. He and Brown visit in the same circles, and therefore it is gall and wormwood to him that Brown should outvie him in any particular. He cannot tolerate the idea that Robinson shall think him inferior to Brown in the appurtenances and appliances of his social position. Now, the probability is, that Robinson knows full well the difference in the income of his two friends, and secretly condemns Jones for adopting a scale of expenditure which must eventually involve him in serious embarrassments. Moreover, we may be sure that he does not base his intimacy with either Jones or Brown on the number of servants he possesses, and the 'style' of his entertainments. 'Keeping up appearances' is, therefore, unprofitable in every way; it almost always fails to impose upon society, whose microscopic eye generally detects the effort and sees through the pretence. By some mysterious instinct, we seem to divine when a man is 'keeping up appearances,' when he is leading a sham life and flaunting before the world in feathers not paid for. And all the time the unhappy man is, as he thinks, deceiving us, we are laughing, or are grieved, or indignant, according to our temper, at the parade and the show which costs so much and yields so little.

I would not be hard upon the ambitious. Their failing has, so to speak, its good side, for an ambitious man must put forth energy and a resolute will and a tenacious purpose to work out his ambition. If it be the sin by which angels fell, ambition is the virtue by which men rise. But then its object should be no ignoble one; nothing so contemptible as that which animates the poor creatures who struggle to 'keep up appearances.'

What an ambition ! To live in a mansion, the maintenance of which drains dry our purses ; to keep a staff of servants, whose wages we can with difficulty pay ; to surround ourselves with plate and furniture at an outlay we are unable to afford ; and to provide costly entertainments for men and women who resent or pity or ridicule the ostentation—all because we are fain to be counted the social equal of persons who have as little interest in us as we have in them—is this a worthy or an honourable ambition ? That lives should be wrecked or wasted for such futile ends as might draw tears from an Heraclitus, is one of the worst evils of our present social system. A writer in ‘Guesses at Truth’ asserts that half the failures in life arise from pulling in one’s horse as he is leaping ; I am sure that the other half are caused by spurring one’s horse to a leap beyond his strength, and all that one may seem to ride as well or to mount as good a horse as one’s neighbour. The wretchedness of a household in which this perpetual struggle is maintained belongs to the almost interminable category of things more easily imagined than described. The miserable sufferer, whose energies are so fruitlessly consumed, has probably the consciousness of failure upon him ; knows that he will either break down under the burden he has assumed, or that he will gain nothing by carrying it. He is engaged in a race to which there is no goal, in a contest which cannot terminate with victory.

This subject naturally connects itself with another : the impatience now manifested by every class to attain a higher social position. I have already remarked that ambition, from one point of view, is entitled to favourable consideration ; that it acts as a mental stimulus, and induces us to exercise our faculties vigorously. Therefore, I am not prepared to utter a wholesale condemnation of this tendency to strive for the world’s prizes. Whether these prizes are worth the struggle—are worth the heartburns, the anxieties, the sacrifices, they call forth—is another thing ; and the answer will vary according to our temperaments and our views of life. There does not seem much to be gained by the mere elevation of a retail tradesman to the rank of a wholesale trader ; and, perhaps, the manufacturer who elbows his way in among ‘the gentry’ finds after all that *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*—that he is neither the better nor the happier for living in a larger house, or driving a pair of bays instead of trusting to his own legs ! Too often the

higher social position is gained at a terrible cost ; not only at the cost of physical vigour and intellectual vivacity, but at the cost of freshness of heart and purity of soul and rectitude of conscience. The man, to reach the shore which in the distance shines with so delusive a glow, has to work through mud and mire, to plunge into deep waters, to crawl over rugged rocks ; and when he gains the strand at last, exhausted and weary, he too often discovers that it is a waste of sand, a wilderness forlorn and gloomy. Contemplating the spectacle which such an one presents, Jeremy Taylor is moved to speak of ambition as full of distractions and teeming with stratagems. It is an infinite labour, he exclaims, to make a man's self miserable, and the utmost acquisition is so goodly a purchase that he makes his days full of sorrow to enjoy the troubles of a brief reign. 'Therefore,' he says, 'there is no greater unreasonableness in the world than in the designs of ambition ; for it makes the present certainly miserable, unsatisfied, or troublesome, and discontented, for the uncertain acquisition of an honour which nothing can secure ; and besides a thousand possibilities of miscarrying, it relies upon no greater certainty than our life ; and when we are dead, all the world sees who was the fool.'

The worst of it is, that the ambitious do not always consider what are the chances of their ambition proving successful. They do not wait to see whether the ladder by which they seek to climb is planted upon firm ground ; and before they are half-way up, it slips, and precipitates them headlong. Sometimes the ladder itself is no trusty fabric, and yields to the steps of the unlucky climber. Every day presents us with melancholy instances of men who attempt a work for which they are not fitted, or which they have not the means to carry out, and whose labours necessarily result in melancholy failure. 'Know thyself,' said the Greek sage ; and doubtless he meant that we should know the measure of our faculties, the range of our powers, in order that we might undertake nothing we could not accomplish. Before we enter upon a labour that must consume the best part of our lives, it is essential then that we should consider how far we are adapted to prosecute it to a successful end, lest we should simply prepare for ourselves an old age of unavailing regret.

What is wanted in our present social condition is not so much this feverish effort to rise from one class into another, as

a better feeling, a more cordial understanding, between classes. It was supposed that this better feeling, this more cordial understanding, would be arrived at as education advanced, and as the increasing prosperity of the nation improved the position of the lower orders ; but, on the contrary, the gulf between the 'upper' and the 'lower,' between the 'privileged' and the 'unprivileged,' has deepened and widened, and, I believe, there exists at present a stronger antagonism than has ever before been known. How this antagonism may be neutralised, or dissipated, it scarcely falls within my province to inquire ; but I may point out that something may be done by a stricter adherence on the part of the privileged to the principles on which every code of good manners is based. The upper classes have been largely reinforced by men who have raised themselves and their families to opulence ; and these men have been found wanting in those habits of delicate consideration and genuine sympathy which had become traditional among the English gentry. They have treated, they still treat, the classes beneath them with supercilious arrogance, trampling on their feelings and neglecting their susceptibilities. It would be idle to deny that this is the real cause of much of the irritation with which the working classes now regard the doings and sayings of their superiors. A rudely arrogant speech often rankles in the mind long after an unjust action has been forgotten. A wound to a man's vanity leaves a permanent scar. I am persuaded that a good effect would be produced if 'superiors' would more generally behave to their 'inferiors' with courtesy, addressing them as if they acknowledged their right to breathe God's air and dwell in God's sunshine ; a right which some wealthy *parvenus*, by the inscience of their speech and conduct, seem almost to question. I believe that good manners never fail to exercise a pacific influence, and that they would do as much towards bridging over the difference between classes as the nostrum of any political reformer or moral philosopher. A polite—that is a polished—man puts his neighbour at his ease, and by so doing confirms his self-respect ; and no one can be ungrateful towards the man who renders him so inestimable a service. For what greater obligation can be conferred upon us than to raise us in our own esteem, and restore that confidence in ourselves, that sense of our dignity, which, perhaps, a series of misfortunes or a long course of contumely

has broken down? It is in this way that the truth may be proved of the essayist's saying: 'Fine manners show themselves formidable to the uncultivated man.' But the uncultivated man may, in his turn, submit to a test of his own good manners; and convince the observer that he is qualified for a higher position by not being ashamed of the one he occupies. He will preserve his independence, by reflecting that the work he does is in its way a nobler and more useful work than that which is done by the creatures of fashion. With this knowledge at his heart he will maintain a manly demeanour, not churlish or aggressive, but firm, resolved, composed, and self-reliant. Do you know Emerson's apologue?

'The mountain and the squirrel  
Had a quarrel;  
And the former called the latter "Little Prig."  
"You are doubtless very big;  
But all sorts of things and weather  
Must be taken in together,  
To make up a year  
And a sphere.  
And I think it no disgrace  
To occupy my place.  
If I'm not so large as you,  
You are not so small as I,  
And not half so spry.  
I'll not deny you make  
A very pretty squirrel track;  
Talents differ, all is well and wisely put;  
If I cannot carry forests on my back,  
Neither can you crack a nut."

This assertion by each class of its peculiar strength and of its place in the general economy will, if made in a moderate and patient spirit, tend to establish an amicable sentiment between all classes, and promote the growth of fine manners, based on the ground of self-respect.

To assist in bringing about this high result, each well-ordered household should be 'a centre of life and light.' It is impossible to limit the extent of its influence; to define, with exactness, the measurement of the wide area over which its vitalising energy will be diffused. Moralists are never weary of reminding us of the burden of responsibility towards the community that rests upon every individual, because he cannot isolate himself, cannot live alone, cannot restrict the operation of his thoughts, feelings, or actions. We know not where will be reaped, for



good or evil, the harvest of the saying carelessly dropped from our lips, or of the deed to which we have this moment committed ourselves. There is a black bit of moorland in Perthshire, high up above the sea, and remote from the gathering-places of busy men, where, within a few feet of each other, rise a couple of small springs. To the spectator nothing more insignificant can appear; it seems as if by the pressure of his foot he could stop their flow or divert them into new channels. In no respect do they differ from the thousand and one brooklets that well out of the sod, ripple down green hill-sides and through leafy valleys, to be lost sight of in some marsh or pool, or absorbed in larger streams. But one of these springs swells into the Clyde, washes a great city, and empties its waters into the Atlantic. The other goes on its way, widening and deepening, and after traversing a long reach of cultivated ground, becomes the boundary line between two kingdoms, and under the name of the Tweed, flows into the German Ocean. In like manner it is that the words and works of each one of us pass far out of our range and knowledge, and grow broader as they pass, and become, if wise and good in themselves, a fertile channel of wisdom and goodness to our fellow men. Thus it is that each household, if rightly administered, will prove a source of blessings, which we cannot estimate in number or in character, to a constantly increasing circle, and contribute directly as well as indirectly to the general welfare of the country. Thus it is that the way in which masters govern their servants, and servants obey their masters, must be regarded as essentially a matter of national interest; and hence that broader and more liberal etiquette which, in the pages of the present volume, I have endeavoured to indicate, claims the attention of the moralist in its application of the old and glorious rule: 'Do to others as you would that others should do unto you.' Such an etiquette is obviously an all-important agent of Social Reform.



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